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Florian Thalhofer And The Korsakow System

Monica Ponzini



If Shakespeare considered the world a theatre, Florian Thalhofer believes the world is a hyperlink system. That is how he represents it, film after film, shooting landscapes, stories and revelations which are “assembled” with his original software, the Korsakow System .

The result is a non-linear and interactive film, where the audience can decide the plot by selecting a series of links which are generated by a key word. The system was created in 2000 to make the film [korsakow syndrom] , dedicated to a degenerative pathology of the brain of alcohol addicts which destroys their short term memory and make them unable to find space-time

directions. The stories are fragmented and not necessarily coherent and are the basic model for Florian’s not linear narrative.

Starting from a clip, the programme isolates other so called SNU, smallest narrative units, among which the audience can choose, thus obtaining a different plot and so a different film each time. The classic screenplay is divided and the story, or rather the stories, are the result of a common contribution of both the author and the audience, a narrative stream which moves through the Net. And it is actually the Internet which is not only a non-linear communication model, but also the main distribution platform, where its evolution takes place. An evolution which, according to Florian, starts from a way of thinking that is innate in our brain.

We met Florian Thalhofer in New York before he started touring the USA for his latest project, [1000Stories], which was developed on vlog and installation at the same time. There he told us about his point of view .



Monica Ponzini: How did you conceive the Korsakow System? You define it “a simple hyperlink system”, but it’s really a new way of creating and watching images .

Florian Thahofer: It was a bit of an accident. I was attending the University in Berlin , studying design, but I didn’t like it so much, so whenever we had something to do, I made a story out of it. I didn’t know anything about filmmaking and storytelling, I used the computer and it’s been very natural for me to develop something like the Korsakow System, that’s very logical. The first thing I made was an hyperlink story called “Small World”: I liked it, but there was a problem with it, because it wasn’t very flexible, you couldn’t change things. I forgot a very important story and I wanted to add it, but because of the way “Small World” was structured (each story was

linked to the next one), I had to change all the links. I thought that for the next project I had to work in a more clever way. So, when I started working on the video of the “Korsakow Syndrome” I started here in New York , actually- I started shooting and developing the software at the same time. I created a system based on keywords, where it was easy to have bits and pieces and if you took one out, it didn’t collapse. I didn’t know anything about database and keywords, for me it was just something very logical. I think that if you spend a couple of years working on computer-based stories, you just follow some natural steps.

Everyone thinks following a Korsakow-like “scheme”, then we force our thoughts into linear thoughts and at a certain point we believe that linear thoughts are the real thoughts. They’re helpful, but I think there’s a difference between what we call “thinking” and what we call “feeling”, we feel and we think, but where is the difference? In both cases there’s some activity in your brain, but I think that when you have a thought you can put it into a linear shape, when you have a feeling you can’t. But with feelings you can still solve problems, there’s something complex going on in your brain, but you don’t know how to express it .



Monica Ponzini: Working with this method makes your filming different than a “normal” filmmaker?

Florian Thalhofer: When I started, I didn't know anything about filmmaking, about linear storytelling. To me it's hard to make a comparison, I never really directed a linear film. When I talk to filmmakers, I can see that they think very differently, the practice that you do when your work on something, forms the way you think, the way you see the world, and I think that Korsakow changed the way I see the world. And it's not just Korsakow, there are other things: Internet, for example, changed the way a lot of people see relations among things not a linear, and the computer .

Monica Ponzini: Internet has changed the way we get information, we experience artworks. How is going to develop?

Florian Thalhofer: There will be a new

way of watching movies, read books, etc. I received an invitation for a “YouTube evening”, where people keep selecting the links that come up and project the videos connected to these links: it's like a Korsakow experience. I'm sure that YouTube wasn't aware that it was inventing a new way of storytelling, they just used keywords to structure a massive amount of information. What happens is that small “Korsakow projects” grow inside YouTube, and it would be fantastic if they gave filmmakers the chance to use this system Korsakow is a small YouTube in itself, only for a single author, or two .



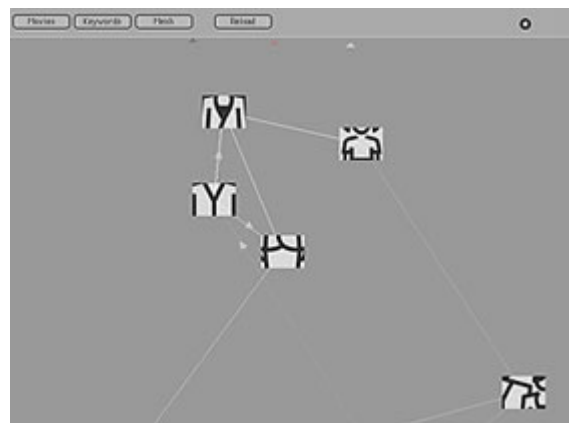
Monica Ponzini: You talked about YouTube, dealing with a massive amount of information. In general, we're overwhelmed with information that has to be processed through databases. Database based communication will become essential, just like we do now with the Internet, or will coexist with other forms?

Florian Thalhofer: People will always watch “classic” films, and this distribution system will go on for the next 50 years, but people will watch things online as well. I make documentaries and Koerakow is the perfect tool, I can’t think of anything better than Korsakow to “see” things, to connect them and frame them, understand them. A linear version of them would be a lie. So, there will be this new kind of storytelling that will use the Internet, and the database is like an engine that drives the car: people aren’t maybe aware that things are database based but there will be a lot of “cars”!

Monica Ponzini: Since there such a high level of interactivity, how do you think your audience experiences and “contributes” to your movies?

Florian Thalhofer: When I make my movies, at the beginning I don’t really think so much about the audience, I just want to learn something about the world. It’s very luxurious to be able to make these kind of projects: I like to be in a shopping mall for a month and think about the world! When I’m done, it’s very interesting for me to see how people connect the characters, and I use the strategies they use for the next project. I also believe that the audience is much clever than I am, since they are so many and I’m only one. And I have the feeling that TV underestimate its

audience, but I think that the people out there are much more intelligent than the authors. It would be very rude of me to tell them how to read my work. Internet gives me the possibility to reach a lot of people: my projects are pretty small, but with the Internet I can produce very cheap and still be “out there”. I don’t watch television any more, Internet is my source of information and I communicate online. I have a lot of ideas on how to further develop Korsakow, I would like to structure the program according to people’s feedback, but I can’t do it yet.



Monica Ponzini: Talking about the Internet, a lot of young video artists use the web as their main if not sole-distribution platform. What do you think about it?

Florian Thalhofer: I met a filmmaker who made three documentaries. The first two were distributed only on the Internet and the third was shown on

TV. He mentioned to me only the first two and then after a while he said “ok, then there’s this third one”. It was the most successful, but a lot of people told him what to do and how to change it in order to show it on TV and it wasn’t his film any more. About the Internet, I like the fact that my projects are so small and I have so much control over them, I can experiment and if things go wrong it doesn’t matter, you can improve and experience more freedom. Maybe that will change in a couple of years, but at the moment it’s great.

Monica Ponzini: Can you talk about your latest project [1000Stories]? It’s a vlog, but it’s also transferred on the

Korsakow System: how did you develop it?

Florian Thahofer: This project is the biggest project so far, with a budget of 12,000 Euros for two people. At the moment, there’s a problem with Korsakow: it’s made with Direct, so it runs on 70% of computers. For this project, I’ll travel within the States and another artist, Mark Simon will travel within Germany . Our videos will be uploaded on a website and then transferred to a Korsakow-based installation, so there will be a Korsakow project growing while we will be on the road. I would like to have it online as well, but I couldn’t manage to do it, maybe next time.



Monica Ponzini: Why did you decided to come to the United States ?

Florian Thalhofer: I was here two years ago, and I've been interested in the States for a long time: they're the most influential culture in the world, wherever you go, you can communicate with other people

basing on American culture and I think that's a good thing. But why is American culture so important? In a way, I feel that I grew up experiencing the American culture myself, but I can't understand this country. I've been to New York and Los Angeles , and there are people who are very similar to Europeans, but they all say " New York is not America ". Where is the real America then? It's out there, somewhere, but nobody goes there. Some came from there and they say it' s terrible, but I don't believe that it's terrible, I want to see it, check it out! So, here I am .

<http://thalhofer.com/>

www.korsakow.com/

The Theatre Of Electronic Surveillance

Annamaria Monteverdi



Does anyone remember *Enemy of The State* directed by Tony Scott and starring Will Smith and Gene Hackman? The story deals with a man targeted by closed-circuit cameras, radars, bugs, satellite indicators, high-sensitive microphones following each of his movements. This movie as many others is concerned with important issues such as control, wire-tapping, data security and satellite espionage. Among them we must mention Francis Ford Coppola's *The Conversation*, *The End of violence* by the German director Wenders and *The listening*, shut in 2006 by the Italian director Giacomo Martelli.

Recently these issues has been handled by a US group, The Builders Association. Its manager Marianne Weems specializes in theatre stage

design richly equipped with digital technology and wide screens. It is the producer which at the RomaEuropa Festival in 2003 showed the multi-prize-winning movie *Alladeen* the non-fairy-tale of call centre operators in Bangalore , India , also winner of an Obie Award.

Supervision is the association's latest output going on the first tour in UK , Australia and US. It is composed of 3 stories of privacy violation and surveillance over free citizens, real-time monitored without their permission. Their lives are so open to everybody's eyes that you can see everything they do: from their banking operation to each of their travels in the country, from the pay they bank to everyday shopping, as well as their encounters in monitored public spaces. Mrs Marianne Weems sets the scene for everyday data piracy stories in a post-private era. Here the stories are tied together with the common issue of everyone's own personal identity as branched, unmanageable information, no more bound to a body but travelling through thousands processors in an invisible data space.



They are people living in the ‘ white noise’ of the continuous remote connection, voyagers stuck at the border line because of surveillance systems criss-crossing strictly confidential and personal pieces of information with those inside the AIDC (Automatic Identification and Data Capture) . Mrs Weems can boast the collaboration as dramatist and assistant for Elizabeth LeCompte and Richard Foreman’s production). She gave these “data-bodies” and these immaterial “info-spheres” tangible concreteness. She managed to do it creating a majestic architecture made of a wide screen, multiple real-time screenings, computerized animations and a motion-capture system.

We usually get phone calls to our mobile number from companies not hiding to know which is our phone network and how much we pay for our calls and being eager to offer us a better subscription. Credit cards, personal ETC, cards with magnetic

tape, SIM, e-mails, net surfing, website attendance: the first filing of our personal life starts here, through target-software able to prise out our passwords, logins, ID, access codes.



Monitors, web bugs (a kind of invisible cookies set by ads companies to track users, analyse their habitudes and sell the information they got to other commercial societies), biometrical techniques, they all allow the identification of individuals thanks to RFID technology (Radio Frequency Identification), i.e. the identification of specific body features through a microchip tracking objects and people.

Nowadays there are data collectors little as a seed of rice, so that they could be inserted under skin and make us become living locators. On this subject we can’t forget the huge US campaign for boycotting the company Benetton after this latter announced the introduction of TAG

RFID for clothes. The company justified this introduction by saying it was due to logistics and new marketing strategies (this strategy involved the undesired track not only of United Colours' sweaters, but also of the buyers). Among the artists working on surveillance systems we have to mention the Preemptive Media, a group of US media artists. Recently they got a new entry, Mrs Beatriz De Costa, who has just left the group Critical Art Ensemble.



In Zapped! they promote specific workshop to come in touch with RFID

technology and learn how to construct a own sound or visual MIY detector (in shape of a key case or bracelet) in order to identify possible TAGS. At last we speak about the Surveillance Camera Player: since 1996 they have realized a critical theatre made of silent performances showing slogan-shields and actions in front of surveillance monitors set in different cities. Their aim is to unveil and denounce the presence social control.

he group redacted a real, regularly upgraded, map published in the net. Moreover, the creation of a web I-see applicative let people calculate their own tracks avoiding the watchful eye of the monitor.

<http://thebuildersassociation.org>

www.superv.org/

www.critical-art.net/

www.notbored.org/the-scp.html

Steal This Film 2: Share Alike

Maresa Lippolis



In the wake of the “diy-do it yourself” attitude of Abbie Hoffman ‘s book, Steal this book (1970) , in 2006 a pretended group of filmmakers who gathered under the name of “The league of the noble peer” , produced an interesting documentary film, Steal this film , showing how the present time’s pirates are causing trouble to the diffusion and production system of knowledge and information with their recreational and disenchanted habits.

The film has become an interesting case of alternative distribution and circulation since it has been downloaded by more than 2.500.000 people and then redistributed in the most important p2p European community.

In Berlin in the glorious headquarters

of pirate cinema (<http://piratecinema.org>) , a first version of the second part of Steal this film was showed at the end of October. The projection was closely related to the creation and production of the project

We decided to interview some of the representatives of the League of the noble peer , the name which was given to the production team of the film.

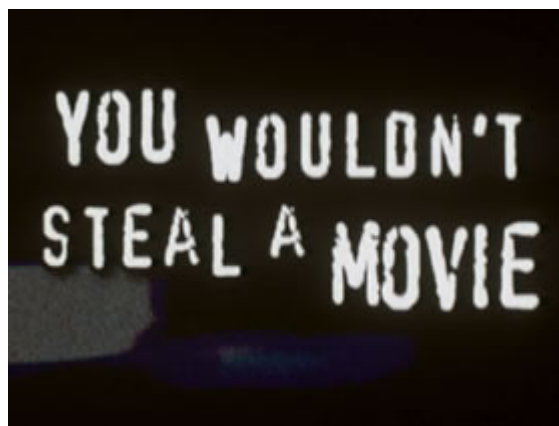


Maresa Lippolis: STF2 is incredibly different from the previous film. In your first film you redefined the idea of pirate subjectivity by describing its recreational, fertile and vivid characteristic, while in your second film it seems you have tried to

legitimate it theoretically. Is it because the film has been produced by channel 4 and thus showed to a different community which is probably less aware of the mechanisms and ideas that are the background of author rights' issue?

LNP: No non e' una questione legata alla produzione, lo abbiamo davvero scritto cosi', e' stato cosi' che ce lo siamo immaginato. Il primo era un film pop, parlava direttamente alla comunita' p2p. In questo secondo film abbiamo voluto rivolgerci esattamente alla stessa comunita' ma chiedendole di fare un passo in piu'. C'e' una definizione che usa spesso Chomsky per le sue opere: le definisce manuali di autodifesa intellettuale, e' questo quello che abbiamo voluto costruire anche noi con STF2. Ci siamo resi conto del fatto che ha una struttura poco aperta, "un po' autoritaria", e infatti le stesse persone che hanno visto STF1 ci hanno detto che questo gli e' sembrato un film educativo. In effetti in qualche modo lo e'. Ovviamente questo e' dovuto anche al fatto che ci manca ancora un po' di esperienza, non siamo filmmakers anche se abbiamo deciso di fare film: l'idea e' quella che un testo puo' raggiungere 5000 persone, se va bene, mentre un film raggiunge un numero molto piu' ampio di persone. Ad ogni modo non siamo degli autori, ci consideriamo piuttosto dei badanti, dei custodi

(caretaker) del processo di produzione di un film, intendendo con questo la sensibilita' e l'umilta' con cui si affronta un lavoro di cura. Resta il fatto che non rifaremo piu' un film con questa impostazione.



Maresa Lippolis: What kind of licence are you going to use to distribute your film?

LNP: Abbiamo noi il copyright, sia perche' vogliamo che la gente lo rubi scaricandolo, sia perche' sappiamo che questo film e' in una posizione complessa. Vogliamo mantenere la possibilita' di negoziazione con il sistema dei media che si sostiene grazie alla pubblicita'. E' una questione sottile, di sensibilita'. Ovvio che chiunque potra' scaricare e diffonderlo, ma vogliamo comunque riservarci la possibilita' di dire "no tu non puoi averlo". Non volevamo nemmeno rilasciarlo sotto una licenza che descrivesse in maniera troppo dettagliata cosa puo' o non puo'

essere fatto con questo film, perché il termine legale non spiega completamente quelli che sono i termini della relazione che si può instaurare quando si attivano delle riflessioni o delle pratiche come queste. Invece ci siamo immaginati un modo diverso, sperando di attivare una partecipazione e una relazione più complessa con chi guarderà il film: abbiamo infatti pensato di rendere disponibile il girato attraverso un archivio basato sul software Oxdb (<http://Oxdb.org>). Speriamo quindi che chi guarderà questo film possa passare da ruolo di spettatore a quello di produttore.

Maresa Lippolis: And what kind of channels are you going to use to distribute it?

LNP: Che domande? anche questo secondo film sarà distribuito grazie a migliaia di download, tracker torrent e il www. Sembra ovvio ma in realtà non è assolutamente automatico: significa riuscire ad attivare delle relazioni che possano diventare importanti per la distribuzione del nostro film; è questa la nostra strategia e in qualche modo questo significa anche fare una riflessione sulla comunicazione e sul funzionamento dei media oggi.



Maresa Lippolis: In your film you repeatedly use the same materials as well as parts of other artists' films and works. Though that is typical of documentary cinema, in this case it has a double meaning, which refers to the idea of plagiarizing

LNP: No io non dire che si tratta di plagio, ma di citazione, nel senso che abbiamo chiesto a tutti il permesso per usare quei materiali. Ad esempio c'è una relazione diretta con i Negativeland, e non abbiamo avuto alcun problema a chiedere una versione ad alta qualità del loro lavoro per il film. Ad ogni modo non si tratta semplicemente di una questione tecnica, e' piu' una questione etica e di sensibilita'. Specie se consideri il fatto che questo film e' in parte il frutto della collaborazione con un canale di distribuzione mainstream, riteniamo che sia un po' questo il prezzo da pagare. Si tratta in qualche modo di un paradosso, al giorno d'oggi e' sempre piu' facile ed

economico accedere a dei materiali, di archivio o dei lavori altrui, ma allo stesso tempo devi investire tempo e soldi con degli avvocati, per capire cosa puoi o cosa assolutamente non puoi fare.

Abbiamo deciso di stabilire delle relazioni diverse con questo film. E la stessa cosa succedera' per l'archivio che intendiamo costruire rendendo disponibile il girato. Parecchio materiale non e' stato incluso nel montaggio definitivo. Ci piace l'idea di renderlo comunque disponibile in un archivio digitale, che sia fondato sull'idea del pubblico dominio o della gpl, per cui manterremo come vincolo all'uso del materiale quello che per le creative commons e l'attribuzione e alla viralita' della licenza (la clausola share alike). Ad ogni modo dovremo prima sciogliere la questione con chi ha rilasciato le interviste a noi direttamente, pensando di concedere a noi la possibilita' dell'uso di quel materiale. Anche qui una licenza o un semplice contratto legale non puo' ridurre i termini della relazione e dello scambio che si e' instaurato durante la produzione del film.



Maresa Lippolis: You are planning a third part of STF; there are some films that start dealing with the same subjects. Why do you think this is happening right now?

LNP: Ma davvero ci sono cosi' tanti film che raccontano quello che abbiamo raccontato noi? Forse vuoi dire che ci sono diversi film sullo stesso argomento, e questo e' ovvio, perche' questo e' davvero un momento in cui il conflitto legato alla circolazione delle informazioni e dei saperi e' all'ordine del giorno, anche dal momento che non e' piu' semplicemente una controversia legale interna al diritto industriale ma

e' diventata una controversia reale che infligge la quotidianita' della stragrande maggioranza delle persone comuni. Infatti il prossimo film non parlera' di proprieta' intellettuale, ma di guerra e di come l'informazione giochi un ruolo centrale nella nostra societa'. Non ci interessano piu' di tanto le persone che mixano musica, copiano o fanno gli artisti in Brasile. Il nostro film non raccontera' nulla di tutto cio'. Andremo alla ricerca di storie quotidiane che incarnano le contraddizioni innescate da brevetti, patenti e dai colossi che detengono l'accesso ai flussi informativi.

www.stealthisfilm.com/

The Gate: Open Considerations – Part 1

Domenico Quaranta



The Gate (or Hole in Space , Reloaded) is an installation realized for the opening exhibition of the iMAL Center for Digital Cultures and Technology in Brussels (4 th -10 th October). Come up in Yves Bernhard's mind, manager of the iMAL Center , the installation was created to handle a only apparently simple question: how to build a bridge between real space and virtual worlds. The objective in mind was the enjoyment of virtual spaces and the interaction with their inhabitants in the physical space without the interaction of a graphic interface.

The problem is not new and the solution proposed the showing in real space of a video-streaming from the virtual world- showed more times not to work. The Gate has not solved the problem and the found solution is

far from being the definitive one. Yet a step forward has been made and many people have tried to go beyond the limit. But let start from the beginning

The backgrounds

I personally had to face a similar problem just once in my life. In December 2006 I was offered by Mr. Luigi PagliArini to take part to the Peam in Pescara , Italy . There I decided to show a phenomenon I was following for a while: the performer Gazira Babeli, acting on the virtual stage of Second Life. It was the first physical time for Mrs Babeli and we watched her with great interest. At the end we chose to show 3 pictures (a self-portrait and 2 pictures representing 2 of her most meaningful performances) and the video-documentation of other performances. Also the idea of a Gazira Babeli's live performance interested us, but we feared the final output. As all virtual words, Second Life lies upon conventions not for beginners, and we couldn't take it for granted in the variety of audience attending the Festival. The visual aspect plays for sure a pivotal role, but in a live video you loose the

prominent dimension of the interaction, as well as the fundamental aspects of production (the inside camera is directly controlled by the user, what let him have a global view of the world) and communication, most of the time by chat. If you take away the public all these aspects, you see on the screen an imperfect clip, without cuts, dialogues and captions. A limited use of a definitively more interesting reality.



As Dante in his journey through Hell, Purgatory and Paradise , we needed our Virgil, a “human interface” showing us the way in a world where we don’t get the rules. As Mrs Gazira is used to say, Second Life is at the end a theatre stage: we had to bring the theatre inside reality.

To do it we asked the Italian-Spanish curator Lele Lucchetti for help and of course Mrs Gazira who was a friend of him in another life, agreed with us for

making Mr Lucchetti her interpreter-. So, while the alien Gazira was executing in a live show her best performances (from Super Mario’s storms to the awful cans of Cambell’s Soup), Mr Lucchetti was translating the chats into words and briefly telling what was happening.

The cooperation was successful, but not completely. Despite Mr Lucchetti’s ability, what was happening in the screen remained distant from the public of the “Peam”, usually used to more direct and “sensorial” experiences. Unfortunately this distance was always present in all Second Life’s live performances, not allowing the quality to shine through the performance in act there. Moreover, if you take into consideration that Second Life is plenty of bugs and that time perception is by far more amplified than in reality, you can easily understand how important the problem is, as well as the right solution.



Waiting for it, Second Front is focussed on the Fluxus-Punk impact of its crazy performances, while other performers rely on the appeal of the audio-visual effects of their interventions. As far as I know, only two people, Eva and Franco Mattes tried to solve the problem. I had the opportunity to follow their performances on two projects (*Real Life / Second Life*) on the 8 th September 2007 in Linz, Austria, during the Ars Electronica Festival. The Mattes tried for a new way: the obsessive control of the “preproduction”. Their performances re-enactments of famous performances of the Seventies from Vito Acconci to Marina Abramovic-take place in accurately prepared sets and are entirely codified in order to avoid improvisation. Also production plays a major role. On this purpose there is an assistant who follows every single act for conveying the most impressive impact to the key-moments of the performances. In other words: the Mattes seem to solve the problems caused by virtual world just erasing it. They are not concerned in trying to make the screen appear as a video, on the contrary they do anything to do it, as the live TVs do for plays and operas.

It seems that it works both for the real public and the audience inside

Second Life -by the way, in a couple of occasions the artists didn't show to pay much attention to inside spectators-. Their performances have a stage in Second Life, but they don't look for audience there. In fact, the exhibitions are conceived for the real world, not for the avatar public.

Troubles arise when you have the ambition to involve both the two kinds of audience .



The Gate : the planning

I've got Mr. Yves e-mail in the last, oppressive days of August. In short, she upgrades me about Imail's next opening and about a project she'd like to realise for the exposition, perhaps with my collaboration: 'something very simple, a 'Junction Point' between the 2 worlds, a floor surface in both worlds where real user and SL user can meet.' The idea is interesting, though not original. It deals with the construction of a mirror-stage in real and virtual space, allowing open

happenings and various communication experiments. I do find interesting to give birth to a performance stage, an installation working as a “box” for a range of events spontaneously born by both sides. And I accept the collaboration.

In the following days, in collaboration with Mr. Yves and Mr. Yannick Antoine, the *The Gate*’s irreplaceable architect, we define some details regarding concepts and design. The most immediate cultural reference are the holes in space and time among the classic science fiction parallel universes; the aesthetical reference is the colossal 2001 – A Space Odyssey, appreciated for its prominent minimalism. The artistic one that is also present in the title is Kit Galloway and Sherrie Rabinowitz’s memorable satellite performance realized in 1980 and entitled *Hole in Space*. It was composed of the installation of two mega-screens in two squares in NY and Los Angeles, connected by satellite and respectively broadcasting what was happening in front of the other screen. The unannounced event had produced at the time an increasing interest, from the first curiosity of passers-by to the next and also spectacular interaction attempts between the two groups of spectators. As in that memorable occasion, we do want the space beneath the screen to become the place for improvised performances,

based on communication and interaction between people and avatars. To get our goal we rely on the symmetry of the two installations (a black carpet delimiting the action area, shot by a camera set on the side of the vertical screen, showing the other world). Beside delimiting the area, the carpet is useful to create a theatre space accessible to everybody, welcoming as a break-dance stage. We want to avoid the fear for the stage and on the contrary promote improvisation, Second Life’s soul: spontaneous theatricals.



Of course the place where to install *The Gate* in Second Life is fundamental. No doubt, to me: because of the community it gathered, the quality of the cultural offer, the particular attention paid to the performance aspect and freedom of action I do think the right place is Odyssey. We speak about with Sugar Seville, curator for Odyssey, who loves this proposal. We also think of

involving the famous collective Second Front for the opening exhibition on the 4 th October a choice that is by far the right one./the best one.

Second Front chooses to install, in front of *The Gate* and consequently of the camera eye, a reconstruction of the universally known Auguste Rodin's *The Gates of Hell* (1900). The performance consists of a kind of mime where the group, entirely naked, blend with Mr Rodin's plastic statues of, taking the same magnificent postures. In reality these poses suit with the erotic animations of Second Life, in a definitively

sadomasochistic sense.

www.imal.org/

<http://odysseyart.ning.com/>

www.gazirababeli.com/

www.artificialia.com/peam2006/

www.0100101110101101.org/home/performances/index.html

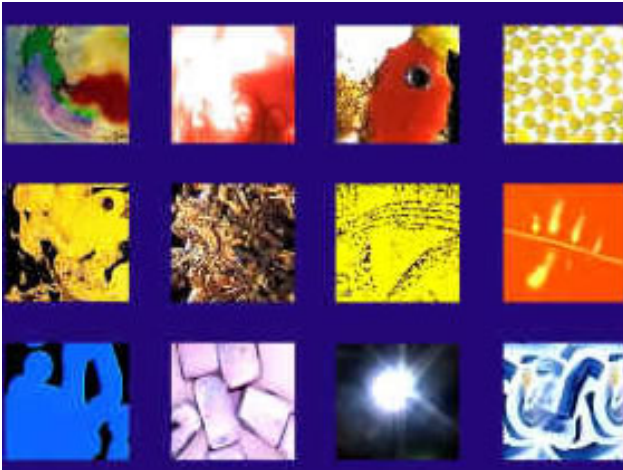
<http://slfront.blogspot.com/>

www.ecafe.com/getty/table.html

www.domenicoquaranta.net/blog/

Vinz Beschi: Media Don't Eat Children

Silvia Scaravaggi



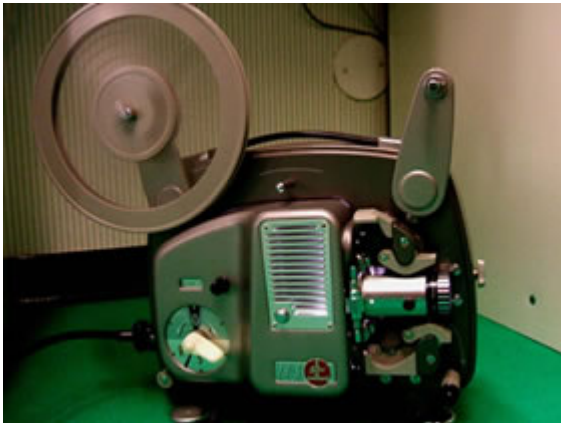
I casually discovered the media, digital, A/V world at school, actually during my first year of university. Before that moment, I didn't even know its meaning. I watched television, I went to cinema, I looked to music videos, I wrote emails, and I listened to music on CDs without an education about that. I never learned to understand the mechanism behind and inside the instruments I used, their history. And I didn't even know anything about their evolutions and implications for the future

Often, when I was young, I listened to voices against a technological and technical development, negative thoughts about the use of new media, about the relation new generations could set with them. Anyway, the first time I critically faced the analogical electronic world, and then the digital

one, I thought that if I'd knew them before, I would have surely enjoyed better and earlier all the advantages the media world brings with it and will incontestably bring. It is not the right place to dissert about this, least of all my intention is a generalist speech. I want to talk about a conscious use of the electronic and digital instruments and I want to explain historical and theoretical knowledge of the novelty the creative artists and students took from them, for everybody. It's just one of the valid reason that can make people understand new media are an effective instrument through which look and interpret the world. For this, and many other motivations, near history, philosophy, mathematics and literature, children who were born and live in a world plenty of media can understand and learn how to use them in a conscious manner.

I found a good, rare, almost unique case in Italy to talk about those arguments, through a concrete experience that encouraged a critical look as well towards a certain "art didactics", which nears children and often adults as well to the contemporary creative world, to contemporary art and new media;

which, even if born in our time therefore similar to our way of thinking, it is often alien and constantly needs explanations, as excluded by lots of cultural “popular” ambits such as schools, museums, cinemas, television .



Vinz Beschi is an exemplar model to face those themes. He's born in Brescia in '58, graduated at the Brescia Conservatory and at the Istituto d'Arte of Guidizzolo, Avisco expert in A/V communication and applied arts, with particular attentions to the relation between sound, images and infant world. As he underlines in his curriculum, “he's connected to the childhood world He's convinced that searching in the A/V universe moments of free expression together with children and kids is a way to create “non-art” out of the rigid and competitive structures schemes ”

Silvia Scaravaggi: Vinz, would you like

to tell me your first experiences in this area, how did you get from your Conservatory diploma to your A/V communication?

Vinz Beschi: I remember with pleasure to the emotions I felt when, young, I assisted to the home projection of the familiar videos recorded in 8mm. And I remember how my attention focused on the unshaped spots that appeared on the screen, provoked by dust between the film and the projector light. They seemed little animals born by the magic of the projection that moved sometime slow sometime jerky until the point they disappear after being crossed the entire screen. And then the sound, the sound of that wonderful Bolex Paillard projector that is now exposed in my studio. The sound perfectly matched with those spots movements.

I think my A/V passion was born from those projections. The conservatory studies matched with the art institute gave life to the desire of discovering how the invisible part of shots, sounds could relate with the visible part, the images. At the age of 20, I was offered the occasion to teach music education at the Mompiano Audiofonetica school. The direct contact with boys and girls with auditory problems, who saw images without hearing the correspondent sound, brought me to create new paths of audio/video education

starting from the point that their way to perceive images was only in silence. Silence is still now protagonist of my “audiovisual” research.

In the music room I had a transparent box, hermetically closed. Inside the box, a phrase: “This box of transparent glass contains the silence, precious as a secret, fragile or tough as every indefinable essence. Outside, far in space and time, noises, sound aggression, talking masses, acoustic universe, violent screams of the excluded”.



Silvia Scaravaggi: Your video work particularly insists on the relation between image and sound, for example “Strip Melody”, homage to Cathy Berberian that, more than numerous prizes, will be presented the 23 rd November during next Cinematics Festival in Brussels , in the author video contest organized by Claudia D’Alonzo for Digicult. Without any doubt, the relation between

sound and images is a substantial aspect of your work, but another fundamental theme I would like to explore is the relation between children in your laboratories and the video medium. A key example is in my opinion “Di tutti i colori”, 14 minutes video results of a creative laboratory with children from PInAC of Rezzato (Brescia). Can you tell me something about this “Videoattivo” experience?

Vinz Beschi: Videoattivo experience is born by the meeting with Elena Pasetti, director of the PInAC that understood the potentialities of the project and involved me with enthusiasm in this research. An experience that invites to explore and discover new meanings, new “beauties” and colors and aspects in the most banal reality of the objects we use everyday. Practically, a direction exercise of the look. In a television position that provided the diversification of the point of view, children realized “live” visual events through composing games obtained by manipulation of liquid and plastic materials. The television medium, thanks to the closed circuit, turned into a fantastic prosthesis to see in a different manner, a “machine to see” and invent the reality.

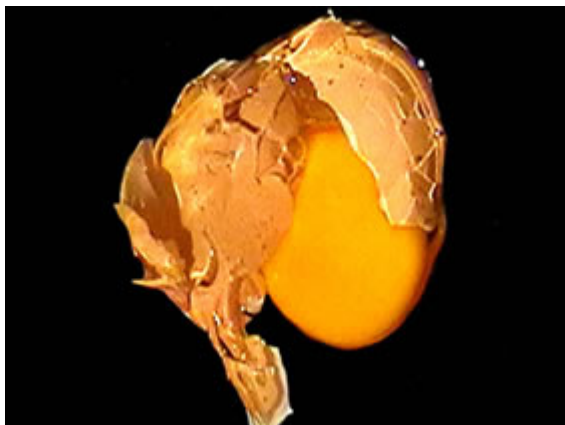
After many years of Videoattivo, this one has been one of the most complete and gratifying whom result

is the product of several elements in harmony between each other, particularly the sustain, indications and suggestions of Elena Pasetti, who strongly trusted this experience and the spaces of the PInAC, a little pix where children and adults felt comfortable, free to try, hazard and manipulate following their artistic instinct. From this experience, the video "Di tutti i colori" took shape. It's a documentary about the childish creativity that highlights a path of artistic-expressive action/research through which we experimented, with thirty five-year-old children, the possibilities conceived to the childish elaboration by the television system as well as the expressive opportunities offered by the sensitive-perceptive experience mediated by the specific television medium. Images seem to be random, due to the game, but they're actually caused by curiosity, amusement and invention of who's manipulating the objects in the game. sono il frutto della curiosità, del divertimento e dell'inventiva di chi manipola gli oggetti con il gioco.



It's been wonderful to see children to flash up, enjoy, be surprised, excite and rejoice in front of a big TV screen in which images were the result of their own expressive research/action. They're ability in involving me and transmitting emotions has been touching. I've been more than once surprised by what was going on in the screen, and so were they. The screen slowly lost its technical connotation and turned into a big canvas. An electronic canvas on which images from all the materials let something comes out: signs, nets, and visions of a world to invent and discover.

The camera didn't let anything go away. Hours and hours of images recorded on digital film. What could we do with all that material? The idea was to create a little diary to live again under a different form all the sensations, emotions and surprises felt during the direct and active experience. This is how the film was born. A film where you can see all the colors, through an operation of cut and paste that transformed the material into something unrecognizable, through transparencies and special effects common in TV, but everything is actually flour, foam, toothpaste, honey.



The visual track became the stimulus to search for sounds, noises that through real, unusual, rhythmic, melodic synch could give new meaning to images, a new rhythm to sequences. A sound that often gave depth and concreteness to live emotions. The video closes with the image of a child with the hands inside a pot plenty of tomato sauce, who's smiling observing alternately its hands and the fantastic image reproduced on the canvas. A smile, an expression, a look but most of all a pure joy in front of this little "art miracle" that deeply involves and moves the spectator.

Silvia Scaravaggi: This type of unique work, and exceptional also in Europe, is possible thanks to the presence of PInAC, the Pinacoteca Internazionale dell'età evolutiva "Aldo Cibaldi" of the Comune Rezzato (Brescia). Following Elena Pasetti, director of the PInAC, what is the meaning and importance of this kind of reality in Italy ?

Elena Pasetti: PInAC is a civic institution, who goes by the borders of its territory and who's occupied to concretely decline the local minds in a home-museum with children drawings who has the world as border. Unique in its genre, it keeps a collection signed by the international character, tells emotions, feelings, thoughts and hopes for thousands of children. Its activity provides different actions. Collect expressive works realized by children in collaboration with schools and associations interested in the spreading of the visual culture produced by the childhood and its creativity expression. It builds formative offers to teachers and tutors in the ambit of intercultural and aesthetic education; it promotes and organizes meetings and ateliers for parents, educator and curious adults.

The PInAC house has opened doors and windows. Starting from children, Rezzato is in relation with all their rights. The right to creativity and expressivity, to start with children's, but also the fundamental right for everyone to beauty. The commitment in working to cultivate expressivity and guarantee a creative life confirms the right to a dignified life. To draw, you need pencils and colors, you need water and peace. In PInAC DNA there's the vow to guarantee to all citizens the right to a pacific and calm life, to instruction and healthy.



Silvia Scaravaggi: With your work, children are into art and most of all into the audio-video medium. How do you get to this? How do you insert your work in the world of “art didactic”?

Vinz Beschi: I make a citation from Jean Dubuffet: “Art never sleeps in beds prepared for her. She runs away as her name is pronounced, she loves the unknown. Her best moments are when she forgets her name”. It is not easy nowadays to involve children into art paths, because of the indefinable state of art. I like thinking at the word “art” as close to the word “limb” (N.T.T.: in Italian limb is written “arto”). Limb as hand; limb as eye and hear Limb as video camera. I think participating with a group of children where together you near things, materials, objects in a different and unusual manner is an art that finds its existence not in the result but in the collective itself. When children intensively stop on everyday gestures

and actions that seem empty of meaning, as ripping a paper sheet, turning a jar of tomato sauce or pronouncing an insignificant word, trying to collectively taste forms, lines, sounds, silences and colors, I think those are the moments when the meaning of the word art take shape.

Where does anyway art start and ordinary gesture finish? How I would like to know it I think it is found not in the research of new realities, rather in new manner to relate with the existent. I think involving kids in restrained experiences, lived with the senses through the camera eye and hear, means keeping in mind the influence the audio-video area plays on the identity formation and the developing of creative and aesthetic abilities, such as personal strategies to interact with others and the reality around us.



Silvia Scaravaggi: PInAC is an extraordinary reality that allows the

work with children together with electronic media. In my opinion, this means being conscious and assuming the responsibility of making children approach a type of society that is soaked with media. Is this a way to make people conscious of electronic and digital media since they are children, and teaching how to understand it and use it in a creative and personal manner, without being overwhelmed by them?

Vinz Beschi: For sure. The relation children-TV has been object of many books written by psychologists, sociologists and educators. Some of them say it's wrong; some of them say it's ok; some of them stay in the middle, saying children only have to have small quantities of it. Far from demonizing TV or praising its qualities, I think it is necessary schools and all other educational spaces instruct children to watch and live TV.

The creative/expressive activity of the "electronic brushes" research of the PInAC puts side by side a series of experiences inside the Avisco of Brescia, cultural and professional association that promotes research activities, formations, updates on audiovisual languages. It's been twenty years since Avisco has been helping children to see and use things (the world), representing them with the immediate perceptive languages, as images and sounds. It made

children relate with TV, trying to find path to tell thoughts, experiences and desires.

Among all the experiences, "Dentro il video, oltre la TV" is a particularly significant one. It's a project that proposes the dismantle of television, making children talk with the TV language through a theoretic-operative path that wants to leave, through games and expressive activities, huge space to imagination and creativity. In the audiovisual laboratory, children have the occasion to live all these opportunities experimenting the expressive-creative potentialities of the video technique, exploring with the eye, hands and heart, games and situations that become electronic images, substantially television.

Starting a production path means do not follow a linear and regular path, which can be described with a diagram in all its passage, but activating a conceptual process of experimental origin, with the great ambition to explain how the mind works.



you tell me something about it?

Silvia Scaravaggi: What type of collaborations do you establish in this sector? Which are, in your opinion, in Italy, the most sensitive realities about those themes?

Vinz Beschi: More than PInAC, where I have the possibility to invent particularly creative research paths, I collaborate to audiovisual projects in many school institutes, from kindergarten to university. Moreover, I collaborate with public and private institutions that care about media education. As Avisco, there are many others realities that worry about those themes and that all refers to CIAS. I would like to mention the Cineteca Municipale of Bologna, with the "Schermi e lavagne" program; the city of Turin, Divisione Servizi Educativi, with the historical laboratories "Immagine di via Millelire" and "Immagine2"; the GET image didactic and Cinema Academy of Bari; Multimagine of Bergamo; the Biennale of Cinema in Pisa; the Venice municipality services of educative projection

Silvia Scaravaggi: Is your last video "White paper", who's been selected and will be presented during the next edition of INVIDEO International exhibition of video and cinema in Milan from 7 th to 11 th November '07, the result of a work with children? Can

Vinz Beschi: "Carta Bianca" is born from a laboratory experience who involved an heterogeneous group of boys and girls from 12 to 15 years old, coming from the junior school of Rezzato. As all my laboratories, this one started with silence inside and outside. Silence as the white space of a canvas ready to receive brushes on it. Silence ready to be interrupted, pierced by visual/sound brush strokes. Can silence be a white paper? Can we break, upset, pierce and rip silence with a white paper? How?



Kids have been invited to try all the possibilities offered by a paper sheet. A chaotic, almost uncontrollable situation was born, where everybody let loose, producing intense actions and noises.

Once this irrepressible impulse to destroy and provoke, we observed the panorama composed by shreds and, going back to silence, we collected

everything into bags till the point of making the space free again. Some moments of silence again. Now, it's up to the eyes and hears of the camera to explore the white paper and capture the experimented action.

Everyone chose its own visual and sound gesture and realized it in front of the cameras, while 2 other guys were cameraman and clapperboard-man.

"Carta Bianca" is the story of a paper sheet, without sense but plenty of "senses", where at the beginning the result was undefined, where nothing is told, maybe just little histories: without an opening, without an end. Stories developed around silence, breath, hearing, chaos and action. Sounds and images that follow a never established order that surfaces the causality. "Carta Bianca" has been an active, concrete, sensual experience, in which participants have been thrown without fear, surprised by their own results, pleasantly transported by images and sounds, by their gestures on a white paper.



The laboratory experience has been lived in an intense atmosphere and the emotional involving made provoking and overconfident adolescents be transported by the idea of playing with a white paper. They showed a deep gesture: the hands of a participant that almost finished its action close the execution as an orchestra director ends a slow time. A simple rip in the paper can represent the laceration, the division, the rupture or a slow agony. The paper and gesture around it can represent joys and pains.

And also an homage to Lucio Fontana his cuts, his holes "Carta Bianca" will be presented, after INVIDEO, the 1 st December inside the "20es Les instants video" in France , inside the section "Vidéo ponctuée de poésie".

www.vinzbeschi.it

www.pinac.it

Who Is Afraid Of The Dark?

Claudia Moriniello



Composer, performer and sound installer, John Duncan is a rare example of those artists who have always been totally engrossed in existential research and for more than twenty years has been a pivotal figure for radical experimentation.

His long and varied career, characterized by electroacoustic intensity and performative art events, goes through the results of his rigorous researches in the most different topics and settings (arcane, metaphysical, transgressive).

Duncan creates his work as an energy catalyst, and through his work he tries and encourage the audience to participate in the process of research and self-discovery. This interview took

place in Palermo, and not by chance on the occasion of a performance-concert for four channels “surround sound”. The audience floats immersed in the deepest and absolute dark, so as to amplify their sense perception which involves not only music but also the a-dimensional atmosphere created to obtain a deeper involvement.

This completes in a certain sense the interview Silvia Bianchi made for Digimag some time ago (<http://www.digicult.it/digimag/article.asp?id=717>) in order to deeply understand the incredible artistic universe of the American artist John Duncan (who was born in 1953 in Wichita, Kansas, but has been living in Italy for a couple of years). He grew up with the performing art and studied with Allan Kaprow, later focusing on extreme realities such as that of pornography. In his record production we find relations with science and energy; the artist breaks the matter to reveal its structure, to analyze the character of its elements and find the essence of the substance itself, privileging the work on short waves.



Claudia Moriniello: You are an eclectic artist and by ranging from sound to videos and artistic performances you are one of the few left who is immersed in existential research. What are the fields of your researches?

John Duncan: I'm very interested in existence, in all its forms, in terms of being alive. For this reason I push the limits forward, to catch what is unconscious and latent in all of us.

Claudia Moriniello: Both your electroacoustic work and your performances show a transgressive and mysterious personality which is never wholly revealed. What's the border between what you express and the part you do not because it is private?

John Duncan: No, that empty space, that not expressed part of my soul, is not a limit. Moreover, I learned to use my soul as a generative power and as material

Claudia Moriniello: So, what is that is left for you only and kept inside you?

John Duncan: My mistakes...



Claudia Moriniello: If we consider artistic creation an inner urge that screams because it wants to show, what happens once it is born?

John Duncan: In my experience, it comes from outside. From where exactly, is a part of the research, I really don't know. In any case, it develops its existence independently by me. As all of us, it has its own bad and beautiful aspects, sometimes *in extremis* ...

Claudia Moriniello: In your hands sound becomes physical and real and the body is attacked and hit. Through the perception of sounds the senses drift until they become flat and liquid; then they disappear by evaporating. The body empties, disappears, becomes air. From physics to metaphysics: are they really so close?

John Duncan: I don't know. Everyone lives his own existence, according to the listener, to his serendipity, his behaviour, his freedom and limits.



John Duncan: First of all, it becomes the creative process for the other. My process and my role work only as a unique energies catalyst

Claudia Moriniello: So your work is a channel, a means to reach a higher, detached, free condition...

John Duncan: This is the intention, to supply and to be an instrument.



Claudia Moriniello: Your works have often a subtle, desecrating and provocative theatrical component. You always drag your audience into a sense vortex and often you involve them physically too. Why?

John Duncan: To meet me on the half of the creative process. Every time the audience have to decide to accept or not the rules to be part of the creative process, as entering in a completely dark room totally naked, this decision become part of the process and of the art. IF you decide to accept, art and experience continue and develop. If you don't accept, that decision reflects a personal limit, but it is art as well.

Claudia Moriniello: So the other has in any case an important role in your creative process?

Claudia Moriniello: It often happens that you push the user to a sense overexposure through light or sound. Are those the means or the goal?

John Duncan: The means

Claudia Moriniello: What does the word "synergy" remind you?

John Duncan: Parallel universes!

Claudia Moriniello: What is darkness for you? Is it a dimension, a condition, or what else?

John Duncan: It is the lack of

continuous distraction, a rare luxury,
like the silence after a noise overload.



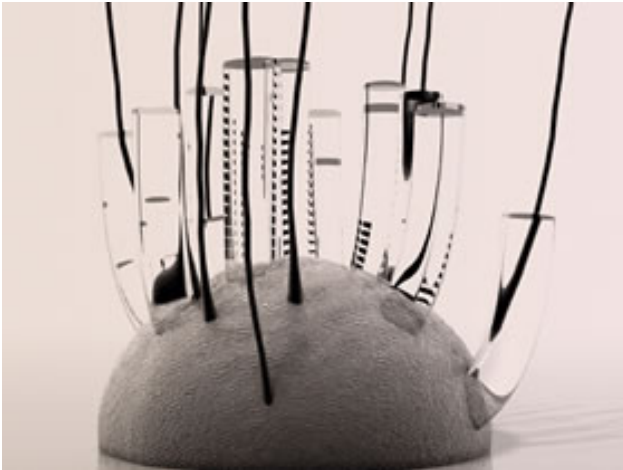
Claudia Moriniello: What do you expect or what would you wish to receive from those who come and see your performances and/or concerts?

John Duncan: Attention, with an open mind. If my works deserve it...

www.johnduncan.org/

Quasi Objects Project By Lorenzo Oggiano

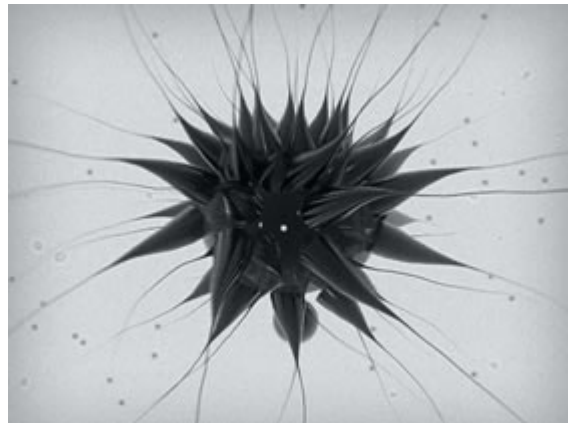
Bertram Niessen



Some times writing a Digimag article is a little nightmare. No one of your contacts answers, the issue date gets closer and Marco Mancuso rightly starts asking for some material.

his interview is one of the rare cases where the article appears from nothing. I met Lorenzo Oggiano during an inauguration, and I didn't link his name with anything specific. Once visited his website I though made the puzzle of name and face with the extremely fascinating "Quasi-Objects" projects, that I already had the opportunity to see. Hypnotic mutation of micro entities, laboratory flavor and contrast liquid smell. Well I couldn't miss the occasion. More than the meeting with one of the few Italian experimenters that cleverly and consciously use the 3D, I had a fine chat with an artist with

theory reflexivity out of common. Good lecture.



Bertram Niessen: First of all, can you say something about yourself, about your personal and artistic travel and how did you get into the work you're developing during those years?

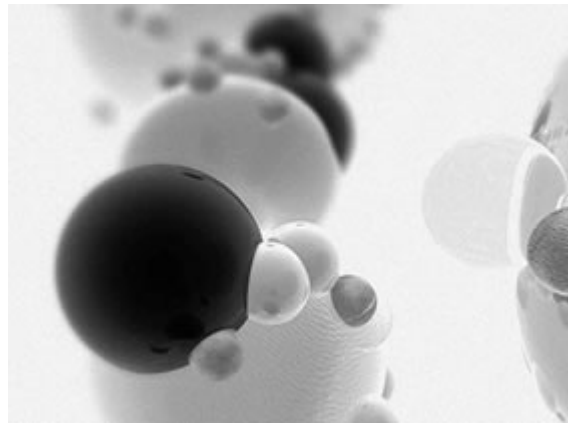
Lorenzo Oggiano: Happy childhood, unquiet adolescence in Vicenza. The time spent in Bologna was determining. I lived there from the '86 to the '97, divided between the freelance graphic activity and the usual frequenter of self-managed spaces. I graduated at the visual arts DAMS, with a thesis about the relationships between contemporary art and new technologies that occupied with enthusiasm lots of my time. From the late '97, I moved to

Sardinia where I found the right dimension, necessary to bring on my research.

Bertram Niessen: Where does your fascination for bio-technological hybrids started? It's an argument that's more and more spreading inside contemporary art. I think about projects such as Res-qualia, that you collaborated in, but also projects by Adam Brandejs, Oron Catts and Ionat Zurr. What do you think about the international panorama?

Lorenzo Oggiano: Well, there's lot of artists with different methodologies and vision interested to themes interconnected to the relationship between corporeity and technologies, and the database of Res-qualia represent an excellent platform to start for those willing to experiment in this ambit. Whilst the technical-scientific progress gives during last years new and powerful tools to work and a new consciousness about the quality and strength of the actual transformation, I think it is important to underline the continuous contemporary research towards the fragmentation of the body that interested the scientific, artistic and philosophic modernity. For sure, the recent scientific discoveries and the power of those in different disciplines and applicative ambit throw a new light on the sense of life that we can see reflected in a determining way on

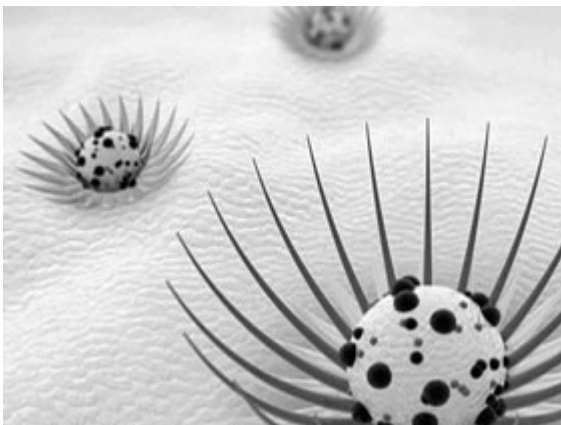
the contemporary artistic experimentation. Art developed, with a more and more accelerated rhythm from the middle 19 th century, an important role of connection/articulation between reality plans often too much separated, contributing to open the body to the outside, founding it with the environment, de-naturalizing, de-structuring, turning it into something "philosophically available" to integration, recombination, projection.



With those premises, the (post)evolutionary prospective that's delineating represent for every artist a further, stimulating opportunity to contribute to the pre-figuration and reading of the real. Whilst questions are numerous and complex, the international artistic panorama seems extremely reactive, positive to the confrontation and, as you observed, the proposed reflections find more and more spaces and attentions,

marked by the perception of an urgency and sensibility that's slowly but gradually changing.

On the social plan, the polemics between fans of creationism and Darwinism, the strong debate on bioethics, disposed by the necessity of operative answers to concrete problems, and many other signals call for the ineludible of those themes and the need to lead collectively a process that doesn't have standard endings. As "participating observer" I'm interested to the biopolitic aspects, to the elaboration of a thought. I try to observe and interpret.



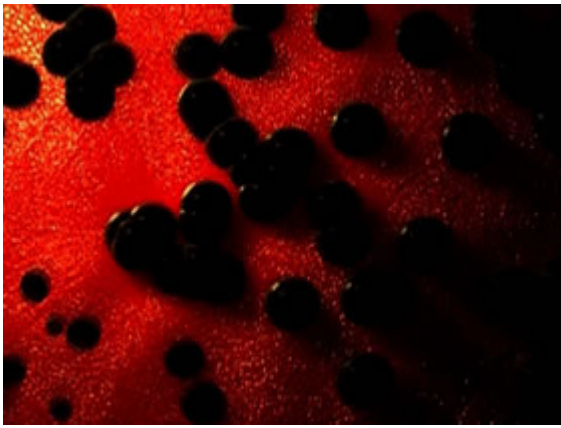
Bertram Niessen: You use several different techniques, but the one I found the most impressive it is the 3D, for its ability to conjugate imaginaries that we used to and visions equilibrated between formal elegance and microscopic hallucinations. How

do you work in this sense? How do you develop those projects from the method point of view? Which is the relation between method and technique?

Lorenzo Oggiano: I usually choose technologies and instruments depending on projects. Evidently, when the work is technology itself as for "Sound Generated Video Modules for Single Channel Output", the plan can be nothing but different, even the method side.

In "Quasi-Objects", even for the nature of the synthesis images itself, the modeling and 3D animations seemed to be able to give back the total sense of the research that, briefly, analyzes the progressive relativity of the natural forms of life after the technological evolution.

A precedent valuation towards some objectives obviously doesn't let the medium be the one that suggests paths and solutions in every moment. Near digital, sometime combined with it, I use, when necessary, other instruments and materials. Fabric, wax, resin, varnish, pigments. I'm working at some assemblies realized with metallic and thermoformed plastic materials. Moving from monitors sometime is said to be healthy.



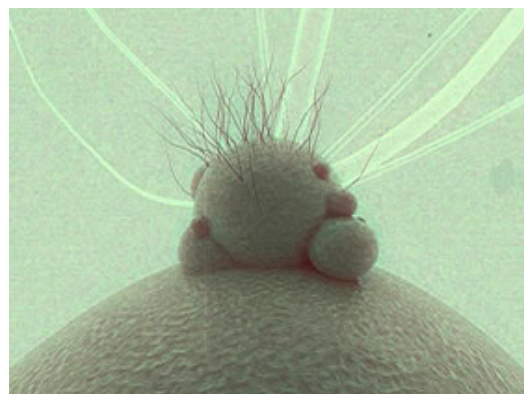
Bertram Niessen: I think that you're objective is to create micro worlds, floating in space and time, from which born choices oriented to renounce to chronological narration. Have you ever thought about a project with a closer narration? Why?

Lorenzo Oggiano: The observation is correct. In "Quasi-Objects" videos called appositely "kinematics" narration tend to zero through different strategies: redundancy, fragmentation, dilation and circularity. Chronology interests me al place of transformation, but also disturb me as linear vector. The reasons are related to the specifics of the project, and precisely to the exigency to say something about the elementary dynamics of co-evolution of the species (among them and nature as well) more than the history of the single occurrences, the principle to organize further the sensible data.

Bertram Niessen: The concept of

almost-object comes from Latour work, if I'm not wrong he elaborated it inside *The Modern Cult of Fatticci*. It's a kind of difficult theory. How are you linked to this author thought?

Lorenzo Oggiano: It is an important intellectual debt in relation to his work and those of many other thinkers, scientists, artists. Changing himself the concepts created by Michael Serres, Bruno Latour, in "We're never been modern", reflects on "work of depuration" that allowed during modernity the production of two distinct ontological areas, human and "non human", constitutionally and strategically denying to each personal knowledge the possibility to think about mix, about processes of mediation/translation, about realities of socio-technical nets. A modernity destroyed by the weight of an uncontrolled proliferation of hybrids that, not finding a place near objects or subjects, made unsustainable that separation between nature and artificial on that a thought, an anthropocentric asymmetric cosmology was built.



In “Quasi-Obects” I collected ad interpreted following my sensitivity the invite of Latour to think the unthinkable of moderns, in the ambit of an “Emended constitution where nets turn legal, where the Middle Empire, the almost-objects are represented”.

In precedent works, and recently in the photographic series “Sample-Kit”, realized between 2002 and 2003, I already got involved to the possibility of “sight record” the inte(g)raction and the semantic movements in the ambit of a relation subject-object. “Quasi-Objects” is the sequel of this path.

Bertram Niessen: Do you want to talk

about the projects you’re realizing?

Lorenzo Oggiano: I’m working at the cinematic week of “Quasi-Objects” of which a preview will be proposed at the Traffic Gallery in Bergamo at the end of January with some big sized pictures of the same set. In random order (and variable priority) more than projects I already talked, new graphic studios, a new video installation of three channels and the reprise of materials from “Multiple Trace Memories”, a work about the past, the memory, the personal identity realized in 2004 using old family films recorded in 8mm.

www.lorenzooggiano.net

Duprass Duo, New Audiovisual Politics

Domenico Sciajno



I had the chance to know part of the interesting work of the Israeli artists Liora Belford e Ido Govrin on the occasion of the Experimental Intermedia Festival in New York. What aroused my curiosity was their approach which, though experimental in its nature, tends to create more relaxed and less aggressive atmospheres than those of other Israeli artists I knew before.

The Israeli experimental artists I knew shared the use of energy to the highest degree, a strong political and social commitment (we all know the historical tensions in Israel) and wanted to stress the substantial break and their independence from Western art rules in every aspects, from music to figurative arts. When I talked with them I tried to understand that “difference” and beside that, I found

out that behind their work as a duo an interesting activity which has seemingly no borders conceals...



Domenico Sciajno: When I saw your performance I noticed a different approach from that of other experimental Israeli artists I met before: more space for reflection and constructive thoughts rather than explicit and aggressive accusation. Is it possible to find a relation between that approach and a new trend towards socio-cultural topics in a nation like Israel which has always been known for its harsh and extreme contrasts? Or is it a peculiar characteristic related to your own personal aesthetics?

Liora Belford e Ido Govrin: We believe that life (and art as part of it) should

be taken in a specific way (at least most of the time) which involves listening, reflecting, slowly progressing among the rest, a way to live and to make art that contradict the way Israel is being pictured to the world (and to itself).

It's true, Israel is a very aggressive place, very hectic which normally contradict such an approach we're taking, but this dissonance between the approaches leads interesting ideas and/or art works. One could stand against such an approach (and we sometimes hear this criticism) by saying that this is a pure escapism. To that we answer - being Israeli artist doesn't mean we immediately must follow the political game, hence, create political art. The fact that Israel is such an extreme place as far as politics goes, makes it very hard for artists of our kind to even start dealing with it... it doesn't mean that we're totally neglecting the political side in our art, but when we do make a "political work" we do it our own way. For example, our audio/visual installation called *Island*, which deals with that specific question of legitimacy of the non political art in Israel. *Island* deals with an alternative reality, processing the world outside the gallery as being an isolated space made by its own rules. While recording the video and audio outside the gallery, we were approached by a security guard who asked us

questions about our means of course we integrated this conversation in our final work and so even when you're trying to avoid politics, it's constantly blowing at your back. It is very 'easy' to be a political artist in Israel and to act according to the moral/artistic codes of such social group, but finding artists that deal with politics the other way around is quite hard.

Also, one must realize that today's young generation of Israelis (people between the ages of let's say 18-30) don't follow up blindly with the earlier generation ideas of Zionism, nationalism and patriotism for instance. By that, they do have other interests in life rather than war or politics.



Domenico Sciajno: Since you belong to the new generation, do you find it easier to understand what is around you?

Liora Belford e Ido Govrin: No, we're afraid it isn't easier on the individual

level, we think every generation has its own problems to deal with and uncertainty adolescence phases to overcome and so do we. On top of that, the current Israeli/Jewish situation makes it even harder, as fundamental and essential values/conceptions of the past are being seriously questioned towards alternative local and historical identity.

Domenico Sciajno: I see you freely turn from experimental art (usually not very easy and comfortable) to interior design with the idea of making a space comfortable for people while they are shopping or spending their spare time. How do you reconcile those opposites? Do you use a “radical switch” or is it just reorganizing the same material and ideas according to the given situation?

Liora Belford e Ido Govrin: Indeed we work on both platforms which we guess you can clearly distinguish between them on most level of life and creation but the line sometimes is thinner than we think. The creation of our art is an isolated and purely process, hence, allowing us to do solely what we want, which leads to experimentalism. On the ‘other’ platform, which we can call it the commercial platform [or our day job, the story is obviously different there, we have a framework where we need

to act by our client’s rules, with the need to fulfill their will, and even though we try to broaden that framework as much as possible, sometimes you just have to accept the needs of others. For example, those video structures, designs for interiors you mentioned, we did for this fashion house on that project we needed to support a comfortable shopping experience and to remember the fact that people need to buy the goods at the end of the day, and so we worked different then on our art. Nonetheless, we hope the consumer experience was a bit shadowed by an additional dimension, hopefully intelligent, of our works which acts as a double agent a critic on one hand and alternative exhibitor on the other hand.



Domenico Sciajno: At this point it would be important to know something about your specific backgrounds and your real area of artistic research

Liora Belford e Ido Govrin: Liora studied film and television at Hadasa College and scriptwriting at Sem Spiegel film school in Jerusalem. Her background also involves a significant period of painting and sculpturing. Ido studied social work, film and scriptwriting on several institutions but dropped them all. At later times, he studied (and finished) sonology and sound studies in the royal conservatorium in the Netherlands. Nowadays, he is finishing his B.A in philosophy.

Domenico Sciajno: It is thus thank to Duprass project that you are able to

put your peculiarities (sound and image). Have you got a specific method to develop your audiovisual works?

Liora Belford e Ido Govrin: Together, we investigate the aesthetic approach by deconstructing the audio-visual narrative using the max/msp/jitter software and implement it in various modes; sound/video art, cross media installations and live performances. Our creation of art is strongly leaning to the aesthetics of minimalism, abstraction, restrained gestures and compassion while introducing utopian art arenas where experimentalism is the core issue.



Domenico Sciajno: Apart from your artistic and personal activity, you are also involved in the spread of new music and audiovisual products throughout Israel: you own a record label, you organize a festival and other activities...can you tell something about those activities and how people react to that?

Liora Belford e Ido Govrin: We run Interval Recordings which was founded in 2003, named after the famous mathematical and conceptual notion of the interval; a space between objects, time between two events or a difference in pitch between tones. The label interested in the gap between objects, the idea of silence, the love for the uncharted terrains that comes before and after the notes. Searching that area which is the limbo: somewhere between the death and the living. The aesthetic idea behind Interval Recordings, as

the name indicates, is to bridge the gap over different polarities existing, both in music and mind, a concept which lead towards coherent sonic spectrum and an interesting cultural environment. As you can imagine, this is an indie label per-se, means, keeping everything at low level (budget wise) but at the same time there's absolutely no compromise on the art, design and packaging of our releases maybe this is the reason why we released only 3 albums until now As for 'Laptopia' Festival; 'Laptopia' is Interval's annual experimental art festival combining audio-visual performances, installations and new media works.

The aim of 'Laptopia' is to expose the local audience to current international experimental art and to broaden the ideas network. Many great artists took part in this festival during the 3 years of its establishment. The territory reacts very well for the festival at present time. We started this project because we felt a strong need for that kind of art in Israel and also we wanted to integrate the work of foreign artists with local ones.

<http://www.duprass.com/>

<http://www.interval-recordings.com/>

Polymorphic Intelligence: Part 1

Luigi Pagliarini



As I had the impression that for too long both the scientists for Mind and the researchers for Artificial Intelligence had taken for reference completely inadequate concepts, at the beginning of the year I developed the concept of Polymorphic Intelligence. This theory has little by little gained importance, being requested and welcomed all around the world.

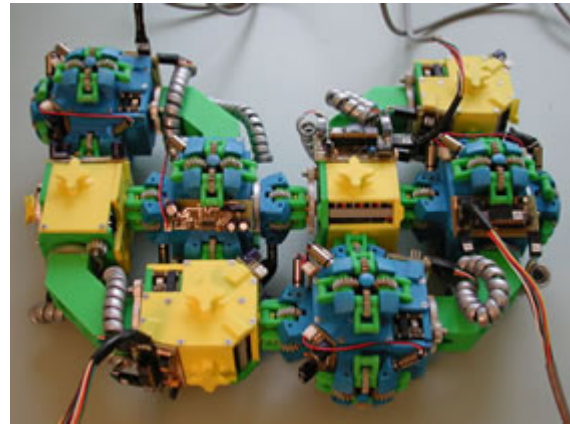
This is an attempt to explain, in a simple theory, the so called human-machine relation, trying to answer to the several tricky theories and philosophies concerning the different fields regarding the mind. My attempt is to free from any kind of ambiguity our thought, to give a straight and simple definition of mind and

intelligence. My definition wants to wipe out the prejudice according to which constructive intelligence- and symmetrically the destructive one- is a exclusive prerogative for human beings or beings in general. On the contrary I want to prove that also a machine can create and have a real collaborative and competitive power. Anyway, according to me, they are able to be inspirers and inventors of useful ideas for our world and our future existences.

In other words with the application of electronics and digital also machines do play and it should be acknowledged- a pivotal role. In fact, with their creativity and intelligence they are co-interpreters of reality. My starting point is that robotics and AI, as well as literature, art and psychology have inherited some common and ancient paradigms, ideas and approaches. These paradigms make the interpretation of the human being-machine interaction be established on a kind of mutual alienation and so this cuts the inverse and growing need for a definition of an integrated human being-machine relationship.



physical and geographic, mental and virtual. In other words machines are the complementary part of our Ego or, at worst, part of our world and our everyday life.



Unfortunately for us, these ideas come from so popular texts that the thoughts written there seem to have irreparably ruined the whole philosophical, artistic and scientific heritage of the last century.

Probably the most influential and 'dangerous' theories are those reported in Alan Turing and Isaac Asimov's novels, where the philosophical approach is an absolute distance between human being and machine. Their notion of machine (and the consequent machine-intelligence) is based on the principle of external and isolated object from the human entity. The relation with machines is then essentially extrinsic, both physically and mentally.

Well, I think that these are the first concepts we should get rid of if you want to consider intelligent machines in a modern way. For centuries human beings and machines have been sharing the same spaces, both

The solution for alienation towards modern machines seems to be only one: that is the one proposed by Eastern, Indian and American Indian cultures. Most recently it has come across the Western cultures through Jean Piaget and other theorists', such as G. Bateson e J. Gibson, thoughts and studies. All these theories constituting the basis for 'Ecological Psychology' or 'Environmental Psychology' start from the idea that the whole universe takes part in the activities of our 'computational mind'. And this represents a real intellectual and complementary potential for our nervous system.

Now, if this is true, the people engaged in A.I. and Robotics have to inherit the principle of Bateson. This

principle sounds as 'the walking stick is part of the blind man, a mental extension of his peripheral nervous system, of the associative areas of his brain and mind'. So the scientists have to agree with the idea that all artificial objects can be a complementary part of our elaboration skills, beside the perception and action ability. By the way, this is manifest, also thanks to the high sophistication and spreading of digital information systems.

In fact, there's a distinction to do: our modern psycho-technologies are different from the traditional one for instance bike (motor system) and telescope (sensorial system) and tuning with Mr. De Kerckhove, they include radio, TV (connectivity) and above all PC and web (interconnectivity). Otherwise, it is to point out that many kind of automation are widespread rather than integrative. Moreover they represent functions integrating and substituting complex human knowledge processes such, for instance, creativity and problem-solving.



Although this process is clear and evident, many people do have problems in understanding this in progress changes. So, we can see and easily accept the changes in our mobile phone contact list, changes regarding the features and use of short and long-term memories. On the contrary it is difficult for us to become conscious that the notorious 'copy&paste', 'undo' e 'Text input' have changed our everyday writing and, as a consequence, thinking and communicating. On this subject I've developed a reference model called The Darwinian Composer , but I'll tell you about a next time. In short, the symbol system we are inheriting from electronic culture is affecting our minds and I do think that it will probably start a real revolution of the whole human semiotic system.

Elements such as hypertext, global researches, digital and satellite maps, GPS, wearable computers, independent robots and so on are no more than an increasing number of functions enriching the biological brain and a parallel devolving of abilities to machines. In other words these machines are on one hand a proof of the restructuring level reached by human brain, while on the other hand they represent the growing 'relying' of human

intelligence on machines.



So I believe I can affirm that intelligence has developed its evolution speed and widely enlarged its action field. So there's another by-product: beyond the traditional biological and evolution factors, intelligence is also developing its own definition. This is due to both power of the new technologies in improving our and their own perception and the influence of the intelligent machines on mind. As a matter of fact, as G. Rizzolatti pointed out after the discovery of Mirror Neurons, human beings learn a lot by imitating. Consequently, if on one hand we let machines copy biological intelligence, on the other hand we can't help imitating some of their behaviours and then starting a continuous repeating process where teaching and learning happen at the same time.

All this is directly bringing us towards the first kinds of hybrid intelligence

while, as it was not sufficient, intelligence itself is developing in a new dimension. This is due to some software technologies such as neural nets and evolution algorithms creating independent intelligence, thought and cognition forms.



Now, it is very easy to foresee what was enounced by Alexander Chislenko, that 'the skill of future machine of sharing experience, knowledge will cause an evolution in intelligence from a relatively isolated to highly connected function' and that 'the continuous evolution of networks for mobile and stable instruments can be seen as a natural prosecution of the biological and technological process for a community of structures intentionally conceived for a global interconnection'. Yet, it is more difficult to get that it is our own brain that is not alien to all this, but on the contrary is utterly influenced by operating A.I.

All this is part of what I call Polymorphic Intelligence.

Beijing, World Researches Politics

Gigi Ghezzi



The American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), the China Association for Science and Technology (Cast) and the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) were the protagonist of Beijing meeting of 24th -29th September. It deserves an in-depth examination of its contiguous and symbolic meaning. It is impossible to disregard this kind of initiatives to understand how the future developing and technology geopolitical relationship will evolve.

During the conference, some deals of collaboration in the formation and publication area have been signed (most of all about the Science magazine), looking for a higher universal commitment for the ethic and sustainable development and for the spreading of the scientific knowledge from the public opinion.

Sense - and pride - were part of this meeting, when the president of the CAS Lu Yongxiang affirmed "Throughout the visit to Beijing , Shanghai , and Hangzhou from 24-29 September, officials from AAAS and their Chinese counterparts suggested they were laying a foundation for the future". To have an idea of the communicative impact of the associations we're talking about, if we have the principal American scientific association (AAAS) and the prestigious magazine Science, on the other side we can only consider that the CAST network (founded in 1958) unites 900 magazines, while CAS (founded in 1949) count 108 research institutes and 200 scientific organizations.



The president Lu Yongxiang and Alan

Leshner, leader of the directive committee of the AAAS, individuated some areas of possible future collaboration, such as the exchange of study programs and scientists between China and United States in the areas of nuclear energy, atmospheric and neurological sciences.

There's no need to underline the actual and historical importance of China in the developing and technology, that is represented by Beijing and Shanghais as economic and innovation centers. Moreover, it is not necessary to be developing politics expert to understand how the majority of the environment politics depend by the laws the Asiatic giant will impose to its population. This is the reason why Wan Gang, Chinese science and technology minister, wanted to remark the value of China integration in the worldwide organization of S&T (Science and Technology) and the moral and deontological integrity that the scientific behavior ought to keep to the developing of every nation.

The meeting is an important stage in the processes of interdependence between the researches and developing politics and all the problems of knowledge, ethic and social responsibility related to the scientific discoveries. The ethic, intellectual honesty and scientific

communication have been three of the themes that provoked more questions, when not discussions. During the interventions some Chinese scientists asked more ethic-scientific control to their colleagues. Famous cases of technologically advanced Chinese chip turned into re-invention of chip produced in the US . Qian Yi, environment science teacher at the Tsinghua University , charged several cases of manipulation of curricula, paper and even manumission of scientific results officially published (most of all through photography).



Standard procedures against plagiarism, manipulation and result falsification are considered necessary. It is a problem related to the scientific community that can be solved at macro and micro social level, inserted in a communicative contest enlarged to the society, where communication is “not only to the public, but even with the public” (Alan Leshner), that

means where it is possible to communicate and listen to exigencies of the communitarian groups, most of all the marginal and poor ones, that mostly need to develop.

Jeffrey W. Legro sustained a more complex discourse in the article "What China Will Want: The Future Intentions of Rising Power (Perspectives on Politics, 9/07). Legro affirms that there's no need to think about China only in terms of strength and aid of its

interdependency to create a form of democratic growth and integration. The occident with its principal characters US and EU must push over this politics, understand the reasons of the closedown, because the actual developing of China, foreseeing a growing interaction with the occidental system, could take new directions and, at that point, it would be too late to create alternative scientific governance politics.

Lab (au): Meta Design. Liquid Spaces And The Cities Of Tomorrow

Marco Mancuso



There are people living in cities who are careful observers of the slow changes which are taking place around them. Such people are not inclined to complaining about new telecameras controlling the access to the old town centre, about the prevailing traffic and polluted air, or the advertising billboards covering the facades of the old buildings in boulevards.

The changes I mean are those little multimedia sparks which have started to become part of the urban landscape surrounding us: digital screens set in frequently visited places (such as stations, squares and airports), interactive shopping windows, public projections, multimedia advertising billboards.

Those elements are more and more discussed and arouse curiosity as much as the latest discoveries in the ever-present demotic.

Surely the contents, the message and the display of information that could be conveyed through these digital systems are definitely far from the apocalyptic results imagined in *Blade Runner* (or in Salvatores' *Nirvana*, just to pay homage to an underestimated Italian product) on the one side, or simply from a new contextualization of the public spaces and the ordinary urban landscape on the other. That could be a possible new form of emotional experience with the environments and relations we usually interact with.

My intention is not to deal with a complex topic on which experts much more "skilled" than me are still discussing and arguing, just in one article. What I just would like to point out is that on the one hand the media exalt a small number of architects who use digital technologies simply as a computation tool for their brave architectural calculations, while on the other hand those studies of

design/architecture which interpret the concept of Meta Design or Media Architecture more literally are perhaps considered less appealing. So, together with stars such as Zaha Hadid, Nox, Libeskind, Koohlhas , who are able to surprise and charm with their shapes and projects (we suggest the extremely interesting essay by Maria Luisa Palombo *Nuovi Ventri* and many other books published in the Universal Architecture Series), there are studies and projects such as Lab[Au] , which consider the idea of architecture mainly as an instrument to reinterpret the space, to enjoy and display the urban network of information, an artistic means to new emotional experiences that can link persons and objects, knowledge and emotions.



The subject is obviously long and complex and its analysis has already been dealt with on previous DigiMag's articles and is meant to be dealt with in the future. Now I would rather take

a break and listen to Manuel Abendroth from LAb[Au] , a collective living and working in Brussels and very close to the activities of their exhibition space, Media Ruimte. There are many projects which the Belgian collective developed according to the ideas explained above: interactive installations such as Touch, related to the urban architecture project for Dexia Tower, 12m4s and i-skin, collective audiovisual performances Liquid Space , multimedia dance project Men in e.Space and projects such as PixFlow and EOD02 ,

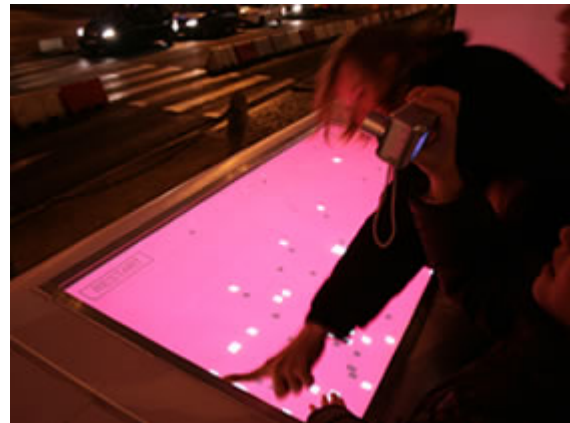
Marco Mancuso: For a start let's talk about Lab[Au]'s activity. How and when did you start, how does your gallery works, what are the activities carried out in your study and how do you work with special live projects or collaboration with other audiovisual artists and performers?

Manuel Abendroth: Since it's founding in 1997 LAb[au], laboratory for architecture and urbanism, explores digital design focusing on the question: how technologies of computation, communication and storage, known as ITC's, transform the construct of space on the level of its perception, conception and meaning. According to this objective, the projects by LAb[au] range from experimentation (laboratory) to production (bau = the construction). Further on, through the principle of a

collaborative agency, LAb[au] explores the setting of a new discipline, MetaDesign, acting on the modalities of digital technologies.

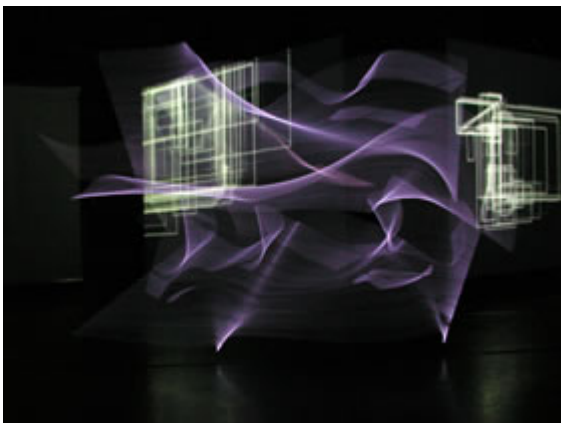
In this sense, LAb[au] follows the 20th century avant-garde purpose, and as our agency name suggests, particularly the one of the Bauhaus. Triggered by technological advances, new codes (semantics) and methods (practice) appear often revealed by the term that is used to qualify them, as for example the word 'design' came up in the beginning of the last century according to the shift of pre-industrial to industrial society. The emergence of the concept of 'design' around the Bauhaus had the intended purpose of qualifying artistic concerns in relation to the technological changes of the time in order to reintroduce them in the concept of art itself. The very term of design has since evolved, as technology did, from industrial design to communication design, system design etc. Seen from this angle the industrial revolution led to design, the post-industrial area to communication design (around the Ulmer Schule) and the informational revolution to system and process design, which we designate as MetaDesign. As non-exclusive these terms can be and as interwoven the developments and purposes, they all are based on a common question: how technologies shape the aesthetics of their time, influence artistic practice and the

entire conception / production / meaning of artefacts.



Obviously, these questions aren't specific to one single artistic discipline but influence all of them; therefore we established our 'lab' in the form of a collaborative agency to cross different methods and practices and thus to explore these questions within different perspectives. LAb[au] 's own background is architecture and our focus is architecture, but in times where the notion of space is changing radically, it is important to research these fundamental questions within a wide field and without any disciplinary borders. Yet during the past ten years of our collaborative work and projects we established a design methodology, which we define as *parameter design*, inherent to all our projects. This reveals another important aspect of our work: the conceptual and theoretic work about a design method proper to IC technologies, which we define as MetaDesign.

In order to examine and explore all the different aspects of MetaDesign including research, production and development we further felt the need to establish a space to experiment and exchange with other artists active in digital media. According to this motivation we founded in 2003 our own gallery with the focus on digital art, architecture, design and music, called MediaRuimte (but which will from 2008 be named MetaRaum). All these different aspects define today LAb[au] as a digital art, architecture and design group, a research lab and a digital design platform.



Marco Mancuso: How do you plan the activities of your gallery in Brussels? How do you think a modern gallery should work today and how do you interact with the space available to you? What are in your opinion the types of artists and the most interesting disciplines? How do you relate to contemporary art market?

Manuel Abendroth: MetaRaum [01t XYZ] is a platform for digital design which we initiated four years ago with a program focusing on the digital medium and its multiple forms of expression, as such: MR+ (MetaRaum abbreviation to MR., say 'Mister'). We follow a very strict programmatic focus on digital design while hosting a series of activities going from exhibitions ('MR.xpo'), artist-presentations ('MR.ini'), audiovisual performances ('MR.wav'), conferences ('MR.txt'), online studies ('MR.www'), artist-residences ('MR.tmp') to workshops ('MR.exe'). The intention of LAb[au] is to propose an experimental platform BY artists FOR artists where experiences and exchanges are shared with a public. New presentation formats proper to digital art are explored, and each invited artist is encouraged to explore the modalities of its work through live-experiment and site-specific development. MediaRuimte is thus as much a platform for presentation and creation as it is a place to experiment and to cross different artistic practices.

One of the specificities of our gallery lies in its focus on digital design, its practice, concepts and formats, excluding all other forms such as multimedia art or art replacing traditional formats and technologies by computers. For example: one can compose music with or without a

computer but there is a very specific type of music which one can't compose without computers such as algorithmic, generative, interactive and programmed music. We follow the same criteria for design, art, architecture... For us it is important to follow this strict distinction to be able to explore digital design in its conceptual, theoretic specificities as in its presentation and production modalities. Of course this approach is much influenced by our own, LAb[au]'s work, and thus MetaRaum is an artist space for experimentation and project development inviting each artist to research and observe new design aspects. This reveals another specificity of our space: there are only a few places where digital artists can experiment, develop and exchange; thus MetaRaum acts as much as a design lab as on a community level. All these aspects differentiate MediaRuimte from traditional art galleries and the art business. Of course MediaRuimte was never intended to be a commercial gallery but obtains public founding's as much as LAb[au]'s own investment.



Marco Mancuso: Your artistic activity is various and diverse. You are involved in interaction design projects and in different kinds of installations, as well as in live audiovisual shows and dance performances such as those performed for Todaysart festival. So, how do you decide to work choosing one direction rather than another and what is the attitude that leads you? Besides, is there “guiding principle” which connects all your works and your different artistic attitudes?

Manuel Abendroth: I agree that at first glance our works may seem heterogeneous; implying various artistic disciplines and formats such as audiovisual productions, dance, fashion, graphic design, architecture and urbanism, but on a closer look you will discover a continuous and methodological approach. On the one hand all our projects are based on the question how digital technologies transform our perception and understanding of space and thus deal with nowadays architectural concerns involving questions about interactivity, immersion, information architecture...and many other constructs. Today investigating ‘space’ is not a question which belongs only to architects but many other disciplines such as dance, music

therefore all our collaborations and investigations within various disciplines allow us to approach these questions from various angles, which I think is crucial in times where fundamental notions and concepts of space change.

On the other hand our work is entirely based on a design philosophy which we define as MetaDesign. From an etymological viewpoint MetaDesign combines two notions: the one of Meta and the one of Design, both very connoted as much in the field of computer science as in aesthetics. In computer science 'Meta' describes the type of information necessary to instruct any kind of communication or computation process, it defines as well its spatial, morphologic or semantic parameters. It thus designates the way binary data is processed into textual, graphic information. In short it describes a higher hierarchy of information; it is information about information. In this manner the use of the word 'Meta' in the definition of a methodological approach focuses on the parameters of information structures, processes and systems, its architecture. Further it reveals that information processing technologies instruct their own language and aesthetics which differentiate them

from other artistic practices.

Whereas the use of the term 'deSIGN' besides its Latin definition 'signare', to distinguish by a sign, is more based on its cultural and historic meaning. During the Bauhaus period, El Lissitzky was employing the term to identify and to found a new artistic approach according to the age of the machine. But rather than being a pure aesthetic reflection it was founded on the necessity to rearticulate artistic practice according to the social, political technological transformations. The combination of both words in one single construct thus relates to its technological, semantic and cultural understanding and reflects our contemporary state in the production of cultural artefacts. According to this, Metadesign can be defined as a practice grounded on the inherent logics of computation and communication technologies in the visualisation and formalisation of inFORMATION processes in textual, graphical, spatial constructs. As a discipline MetaDesign is about the setting of codes / language drawn from concepts of communication and information sciences - cognitive science with that of process methods - design and spatial constructs - architecture.



For our own work this design methodology reveals the fundamental questions about design, its practice and concepts and thus is more relevant than its distinction according to traditional disciplines and formats. In all our projects underlies this methodological and architectural thinking, not architecture, at least not as we traditional define it.

Marco Mancuso: Have you ever had the chance to work in public spaces with urban audiovisual installations and interaction media design projects? Can you tell me something more about the Dexia Tower project in Brussels?

Manuel Abendroth: Most of our recent projects deal with interactive urban installations and fixed interventions in an architectural frame. One of these projects is 'touch' which was the most challenging project last year as it proposed to experiment on a huge scale (a 145m high skyscraper in the

city centre of Brussels) the influence of IC technologies on architecture and urbanism. A multi-tracking touch screen interface sheltered inside a pavilion placed in front of the skyscraper allowed citizens to interact in real-time with the enlightening of the tower by choosing a colour and composing out of points (windows) lines (the edges of the building) and surfaces (the facades) an architectural enlightening (4200 windows, each enlightened by RGB led rails). This interaction is far more than a fancy and playful device to create an attraction but the involvement of everybody in architecture, public space and the image of the city. For this reason it was also important for us that people could snap a picture showing their 'creation', the enlightened tower placed inside the Brussels skyline, in form of an electronic postcard that they could use as a greeting card to send their best wishes for the new year 2007. The entire project, this communication chain, creates an exchange between the individual and the public space, the collective sphere, exploiting IC technologies, its processes and logics, to create a new and contemporary form of citizenship and urban artefacts.

There are many ways to think about light and design; one of these is to consider light as information, be it on the level of a receiver, transmitter or

sender. From this viewpoint and from the terms we applied to it in the Touch project _ light design is the design of communication and its representation in order to establish a new urban sign involving each citizen in its setting. In the Touch project the use of interactive media in an urban context allowed us to explore the relation in-between the individual and the collective. LAB[au] has a long history of experimentations in the active use of IC technologies to conceive and create spatial processes but it was the first time we had the opportunity to do it at this scale.



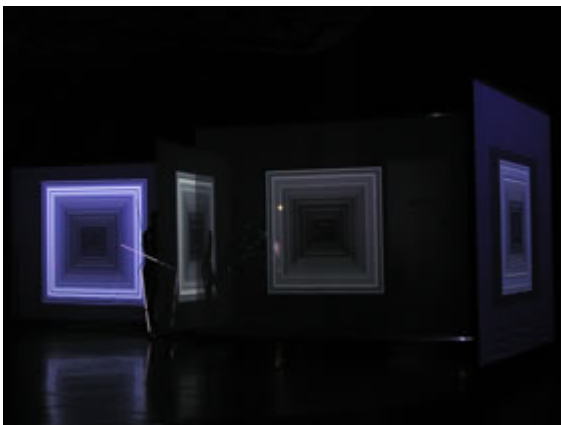
Marco Mancuso: Personally I am very attracted by your activity of designers and architects involved in planning the city urban landscape again using digital technologies. What do you think about media architecture and what is your idea of public installations like those showed during Todaysart for example? How can media work to change the perception

of our metropolis and what are the differences between you and the architects who work with digital technologies with a procedural approach such as Zaha Hadid, Nox, Libeskind, Koohlhass and others?

Manuel Abendroth: To answer this question we first have to agree on a certain definition of architecture. From our point of view architecture and urbanism are structural and functional disciplines involved in the spatial and temporal organization of social, economic, political structures through which they also constitute a semantic system of signs and codes. All these aspects define them as organizational disciplines that process, analyse and structure data within spatial constructs while improving it with a specific significance - meaning. On this level it reflects and produces cultural, social codes.

In this relation new media, digital design will more and more take part in the construct of space / architecture, as it already does in our daily life, a state where its conception directly includes the question of interaction design, interfaces & software developments, information architecture. These developments will play a major role in tomorrow's design / architecture. For example the design of the 'Touch' project was only possible due to our own hardware,

the 1.7 x 0.8 multi-touch screen, and software development. This development allowed us further to layout the project for an outside and urban use and shifted the development from a technological device to the design of an enlightened urban pavilion. Due to the fact that we could cover the entire conception and realisation process we could encounter the development with more design and conceptual considerations; actually it allowed us to 'design' a coherent project, not a technology, according to the contextual, technological and conceptual parameters. Therefore we think that interactive design is less a question of a specific technology but rather the ability to encounter technology with conceptual, artistic concerns, fitting these technologies inside a broader meaning.



Nowadays there are many interesting projects and design teams which

explore new technologies in the construct of architecture and urbanism, including interactive and generative design, new communication channels and smart materials... But most of these proposals aren't realised by architectural offices since they don't investigate these technologies on their conceptual and technological level, but rather as an added element plugged onto a traditional architectural design and which for most of the cases are even designed by external teams. For example to conceive a media façade involves the question of the content and the manner this content is formatted displayed and accessed, which is a fundamental question when conceiving a media façade but which are for most of the time left besides. Or to expand to another example the design of a library nowadays implies information design running from the conception of the backend system, the conception of a relational database, until the conception of the graphical user interface and the way they are displayed and accessed. This conception implies a series of decisions, each affecting the meaning of the system. These parameters and design potentials can only be understood when being involved in this project development and research phase.

One may find this reflection very

abstract but if you pay a closer attention to some ancient built libraries you will discover that the structuring of their content (books), and displays (shelves), can affect the spatial structuring of a building and thus directly influence the form = the meaning of the building. Take for example the city library of Asplund, isn't this a symbol of the renaissance enlightening idea, in the centre of all books stands the enlightened man? When looking to this example one may understand that the structuring of the books directly influence the meaning of the building, but what happens if the books turn more and more digital? Do we have to give up the idea of the library as a public space? Will it only be a screen interface? I think when we still want architecture to be part of the production of social and cultural artefacts we can no longer conceive architecture without taking information processes, communication and computation, in account when conceiving spatial and semantic constructs. Architects have to work with IC technologies, experience their specificities and understand their processes to be able to conceive nowadays architecture. Unfortunately for the moment there are only few architectural offices which involve digital design within

their architectural practice. In consequence most of the interesting examples are realised by people coming from other fields than architecture. This missing involvement into nowadays fundamental architectural questions is for me the reason why so many of the so called 'star' architects design turn more and more into the design of personal phantasms without any relevancy for the ongoing transformations in our society. According to all mentioned references you may imagine my profound conviction that architecture can and has to play an important role in these processes.

Of course in this discussion there is another point that raises question: are digital design teams able to understand architectural and urban issues. When seeing many interactive and digital installations produced in the last years we can question the relevancy of interactive and digital design in the field of architecture; many projects lack any significance and most of the time interaction design has rather an entertaining than a representational or symbolic value. From this point of view digital design teams will have to encounter their design, get aside from the technological gear, and face the public realm and the relevancy and new forms of public space.



production. It seems to us that the most fruitful experiences are festivals with which we can establish a partnership in order to develop site-specific presentations and projects, as we have been able with the festivals you mentioned. I think this basis is crucial to present big scale projects according to their specific modalities: spatial, conceptual, and technological level.

Marco Mancuso: Finally, what are your experiences with digital art festivals? Last year you worked with Club Transmediale, while this year you have worked with Todyasart among the others; moreover, you are connected to Cimatici's platform in Brussels. How did you work with those partners, and how hard it was to deal with the huge organization of those festivals and to work in cooperation with other artists and sometimes to fit your works to very wide spaces as for men in e.space project which was showed in Den Haag inside its City Hall?

I think more and more festivals are looking for these long term exchanges not only to face the complexity of new media works but to follow and anticipate the artist works. In concern of the mentioned festivals one important aspect is that they are led by young teams with a motivation to explore and develop projects broadening the classical context of a festival, and to research long term collaborations as opposed to the standard, rather short, period of a festival.

Manuel Abendroth: It is obvious that there is a shift of generation taking place in the electronic music and digital media scene. New festivals are appearing that become more and more important for artistic exchange and mediation, replacing well established festivals; is it on the level of a more artistic than theoretic and academic focus or on their implication as structures within artistic



For example to present a performance such as the Man in e.space dance performance inside a public space like the town Hall of Richard Meier in Den Haag during the Todaysart festival isn't imaginable without such an involvement and anticipation.

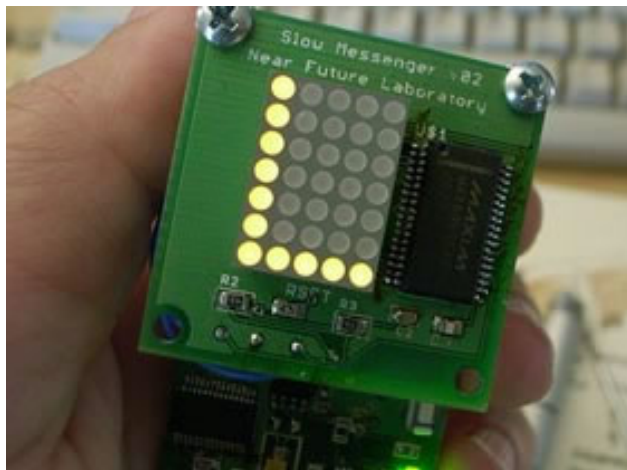
Of course these experiences also ask a different involvement from our side and turns to very unique and experimental forms which is only possible when the festival team knows our artistic concerns. It is very positive to see that all these mentioned festivals follow our work to be able to anticipate it. In this

partnership idea we collaborate with the Cimatics festival now for the fifth time proposing specific projects and exhibitions to complete the festival focus in the field of digital design and Club Transmediale offered us an entire building to organise a two weeks collaborative design cycle under the title of "liquid space". All these are very positive examples and a great reason why these festivals become more and more important their field.

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Near Future Lab: Imagining A Possible Future

Giulia Simi



Trying to imagine new ways of interaction between body and technology is clearly the great challenge scientists, artists and scholars have been engaged into in the contemporary world.

Is there a way not to disappear physically when confronting the digital world? Is there a third way that can overcome the dichotomy -which has not been solved so far - between an anachronistic "return to nature" and a blind transformation of our body into ones and zeros? Maybe a bit of imagination would be enough to get off the beaten track and stop being like trains heading for a planned destination.

Near Future Laboratory consists of a group of researchers who is trying indeed to get off the beaten track in

order to create new possibilities of interaction between man and machine. Using the pragmatic approach which usually characterizes applied science scholars, we could define their way of working "thought in action". From the idea to the prototype, back to the idea, this time probably enriched with new aspects. A continuous movement between action and thought aiming at building devices which can help us imagine a more livable, sustainable and why not even funnier world.

I interviewed Julian Bleeker and Nicolas Nova, the founder of the project, in order to try to understand better both the theory and the practice that characterize their work.



Giulia Simi: Let's talk about the title of

the project: “Near Future Laboratory”. It is immediately clear the importance of time as well as the new definition given to the concept of future, which has maybe changed with the introduction of new technologies. The word lab reminds of something related to research and experimentation. We can thus say that you are a group of researchers trying to explore the possibilities of our future through technology and digital media outside the bonds imposed by the market and this, in my opinion, is what can somehow link you to the world of art. How has your project begun? What was the question you were trying to answer?

Julian Bleeker e Nicolas Nova: The project began because we thought there was an empty space between consultancies that were hired to build things and consultancies that were hired to think about what things should be built based on trend analysis and other such predictive practices. We see an opportunity in a design and research practice that operates between traditional long-term academic research studies and short-term commercial product development. In between - 12 months to 4 years - is a gap we call “the near future.” We think there are often unreasonable constraints within the design innovation and R&D practices of existing commercial enterprises to

build for the market such as time. You get this constraint from the front office to come up with something, as part of R&D or design innovation, that can be channeled quickly to product development so as to have the return on investment line on next year’s financial books net out in a way that will make investors happy. Academic R&D is just run through with challenges that make it difficult to create “outside-the-box” innovations. First is a horribly broken peer-review system, institutional politics that still operate as if it were the 19th century, a glacial and costly system of publishing and knowledge circulation practices, and little value placed on interdisciplinary scholarship. It’s just abysmal.

What we’re trying to do is encourage design innovation that does away with constraints like these. We have no expectations or requirements that we will make something that millions of people will want, although who knows? The point is that we don’t make these kinds of assumptions; we operate quickly and economically; we do not censor our projects based on factors like the expected market of consumers; we are committed to circulating knowledge and insights quickly - within months, not years - using creative commons and not the feudal pay-for-knowledge professional society journals and conferences, and so forth.



This is how the project began. As a positive reaction to the difficulties of engaging in creative, insightful, fun and innovative work with fewer of the constraints we have found in academia and in the normal commercial world. We needed some way to describe the space of possibility for the work we were interested in engaging. Using time as the catch-all “idiom” in which we worked seemed right. It’s not just time in that we do projects that relate to time – but that we are very deliberately thinking about what might be, in some perhaps fictional near future world. In a sense, we are “authoring” some little corner of the near future in much the same way that Bruce Sterling will write about a near future fictional world. Only, we’re not fiction writers – we’re fiction makers. Fiction makers constructing artifacts of a near future world to help tell a story about the world we live in now.

We use this notion of a near future time, rather than, say “mobile technology” or “digital games” as the catch-all for the kind of work we do. The near future is a blurry space that is almost, but not quite, but close enough to seem possible. On one hand, the near future is an upcoming moment of time that ranges from the next second to 3-4 years ahead. Thinking about it is some sort of short term foresight: looking at or creating an almost immediate period of time. Some people may call it “design” because it’s about creating the next “big things” or “disruptions” but this is not the point here. The idea is rather to generate interesting stuff with the tools and tech we have today, some sort of bricolage (to use a french word). For instance, instead of being all hopped up on 3D renderings or Second Life advertisements, our preference is to explore “low bandwidth” creativity such as Habbo Hotel.

On the other hand, the “near future” refers to what is ignored or left aside by what I call the “future stakeholders”: mostly corporate r&d/innovation labs/serious designers/policy makers. The near future is not an alternative world, it’s just there but observable from a different angle. Envisioning it is a matter of examining the edges and fringes so as to articulate ideas, concepts and knots that do not

resonate with conventional, inside-the-box business practices – we look for topics or social practice idioms that have been left behind or forgotten or lurk just below the surface. This might sound very William Gibson-esque (“the future is already here, it’s just not evenly distributed”) but yes we do think the future is hidden in dusty corners: the point is to explore forgotten realms or look at things from a different or even orthogonal angle. There is a quote we really like, which echoes that feeling: when confronted for the first time to Niagara Falls, Oscar Wilde said “It would be more impressive if it ran the other way”.



This is a good motto for the Near Future Laboratory about how to do our research. Yes, we are observing the social and cultural areas of our technological world, but upside down. In a sense the near future would be also a place we’d like to inhabit, a mixture of today’s seriousness and

fantasy, utilitarian and non-utilitarian situations. It’s made out of cardboard, dirt, duct tape, tubes, bad wiring and vinegar waiting to be turned into a playful and sustainable environment. What is important here is not the utopian vision but rather the idea that the near future can be more habitable, more playful and just different from the routine, tired old activities today – simply if we want. And that is the laboratory aspect – we can make new things both because they seem intriguing or thought-provoking.

Giulia Simi: In the description of your projects you refer to “weak signals” of our digital culture which you focus and develop to create prototypes for the near future. Can you give us some examples of what you would define, in this sense, a “weak signal”?

Julian Bleeker e Nicolas Nova: The “weak signals” concept emerges from the literature about foresight, long-range design and futures research. It evokes the notion of early instances about phenomena that may become important in the future. To some extent, it’s behavior, attitudes, products or services of today that announce the future. As William Gibson put it “the future is already there, it’s just not evenly distributed” which means that weak signals are here and can be found. The second step is to ask oneself critically if these

signals are important and relevant to an almost-future that is arriving: if yes what might they announce? and should they be amplified? Doing future research is not just about spotting trends, it's also about creating one's own futures by amplifying certain signals.

That is, taking into account not just what one "sees" happening in these weak signals, but also what one imagines could also happen or might be exciting to experience, and so forth. I think this is the point at which many intriguing ideas turn into "projects" that require commitments of time, money, programming, and so forth. Many of these ideas come from a desire to experience some idea that, perhaps, is based on intuition, or a passage in a book (science-fiction or not) or a joke or a bit of irony one finds cropping up again and again in one's real-world experiences. You ask yourself - perhaps this little bit of social action I see out there, or experience in my life - perhaps this tells a compelling story that other people may be interested in experiencing themselves?



Just to keep our work organized - there are actually way too many prototypes in progress now, which may actually be a good thing in terms of diversifying what we think about - we divide our projects into themes. One theme into which many things fall is "new interaction rituals." Here we are interested in how the ways we represent ourselves in computer-mediated environments can be shaped or modified in some way through action that happens without the usual computer setup of sitting in front of a screen, with a keyboard and a mouse. Where are the other "interfaces" to our digital lives? Can my representation online, on the internet, in video games, as our Facebook representations, etc. be shaped by things other than button presses while sitting down for hours in front of a video game console or while browsing the dozens of social software sites on which I have all these different expressions of myself, my personal life and so on?

We're going about this in a very simple way. A few of the devices we're building record physical movement in a variety of ways. One project turns you into a kind of "human joystick" so that your very broad movements, such as running the length of a football pitch - much broader than

moving a computer mouse or pushing a button - is required to play a video game you see on a small hand-held device. Another project goes even further - the physical movement you might endure while going for a 4 mile hike becomes a "move" in a different kind of video game. The same physical activity might be what is necessary to "charge up" a very peculiar new video game controller so that it has the "power" to allow you to play a video game. Then we have a variety of interface experiments to enroll "new partners" into interactions - these are projects that allow us to use digital networks and devices to communicate with weather and pets. We're very interested in this area of possibility - not just what new "things" we can interact with, but also what the new paradigms for sharing experiences might be. Pets are particularly relevant, as are other critters and the weather.



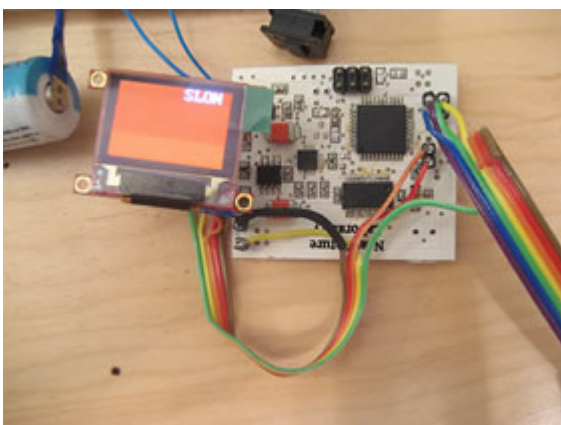
Giulia Simi: In a long and interesting

post concerning the project "Slow Messenger", you talked about "making your own objects by yourself" and about *hardware sketching* as a cultural and political practice. It is something that reminds of Do It Yourself and the will to control the creative process, which is typical of many contemporary art currents. Could we thus define your projects a sort of "hardware art"?

Julian Bleeker e Nicolas Nova: We've talked about it as Device Art which seems closer to social practice than hardware in our way of thinking. "Device" somehow connotes purpose or suggests a purpose. There is also this idiom "left to your own devices" which basically means - what you would do on your own without constraints or on your own, with what you have around you. Device also has a kind of "special purpose" meaning to it - something that has a specific action to perform, also a way to get something done, as in a plan to achieve a specific goal. It's a richer way of describing these little assemblages we've been creating that are active in unexpected ways.

here's also a political impulse that we're investigating. On the one hand we're interested in the kind of expressive power these devices have in their ability to shape how one experiences certain simple aspects of the world. For example, with Slow

Messenger – how can we shape one’s relationship to one specific friend or loved one by unlocking a special message from them simply by holding a messaging device for a long period of time? That’s a very simple, plain, somewhat orthogonal experiment that changes the way people communicate in today’s digitally networked age. It’s orthogonal in that it does something quite unexpected given conventional assumptions about technologies as communications utilities. On the other hand, the process of taking that thought – a peculiar idea that popped into my head during a long-haul flight from Berlin to Los Angeles – and expressing it as an assembly of “something” is quite instructive. What we find engaging is actually experiencing the process of expressing the design through its multiple stages of evolution and tying all these disparate bits together.



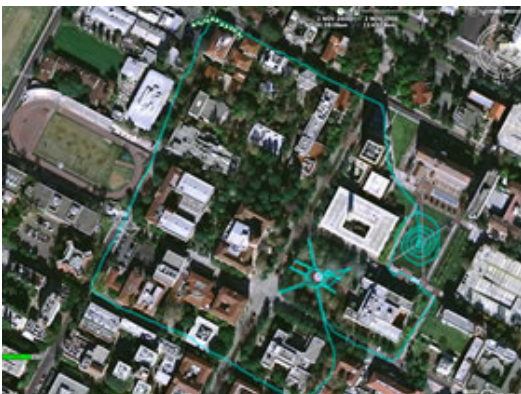
We’ve learned that technologies are

social practice – meaning that they are more than just a static, inert component. They are embodiments of a variety of social forces and when we make our own stuff, we can see all those factors and influences in play and then never really look at technologies the same way again. Wrapping all the aspects of the Slow Messenger project is instructive in this way. It ties together this vague day dream on an airplane flight, some sketches in a notebook, probes of relevant prior art, some books on the social character of time, the history of the telegraph, interesting reports on submarine communication (which is very, very slow because of the physics of radio transmission through salt water) and the political issues associated with that and of course all of the notes and specifications and design requirements of the individual electronic components used in constructing the actual Slow Messenger device.

This is an absolutely crucial aspect of the process for us. It’s not enough any more to have ideas that cannot be experienced “in the hand” or lived with in some fashion. This isn’t to say we privilege material over ideas, but what we mean is that the action involved in materializing ideas draws one into an incredibly rich world that turns back around to inform the ideas you have. There’s also validation and satisfaction that comes with crossing

back and forth between ideas and their expression and articulation into something that you can point to and say - “this takes an idea I had and allows you to experience it, first hand.” The digital culture we live in nowadays, and within which The Near Future Laboratory finds itself circulating puts great emphasis on being clever both with one’s ideas and in their expression - it’s good to have expert Ninja skills for crossing back and forth between thinker and tinkerer with ease.

Thinking as making - or thinking while making is a way to invigorate and make richer the analytic work that goes alongside of the construction of artifacts in the laboratory. We have a strong sense that you will have a stronger basis for analysis, a more informed basis upon which to synthesize material into actionable reports, and an infinitely better appreciation for the meaning of these new social practices. There’s a certain validation and authority that comes from not just analyzing from afar, but from engaging the practice deeply.

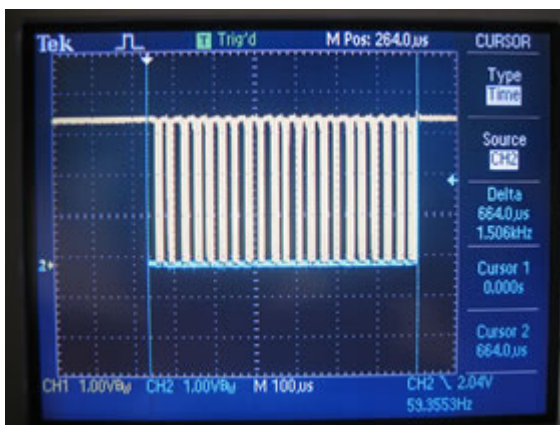


Giulia Simi: I believe that “Slow Messenger” is one of the most interesting projects you have developed so far. There is a turnover of the usual view according to which technology has to create devices that reduce communication time regardless of concrete bonds. On the contrary, you created a device that not only slows the process of communication, but also binds it to our body movements (the message is not sent if we stay still all day long, for example if we remain seated in front of a computer). Do you think it will be possible for technology to stop chasing the acceleration of time? Or rather, will slowness always be an eccentric and somehow “artistic” view of reality?

Julian Bleeker e Nicolas Nova: It’s not unrealistic, certainly, if only measured by your response. I can imagine that there would be some people for whom this kind of interaction would be desirable in particular contexts. There’s an intimacy to this kind of message sending and receiving paradigm that was what motivated the project. There are messages one may want to languish over - or messages from individuals that we would want to savor and take time receiving. We were trying to capture the deliberate, “writerly” character of

pre-digital communication, like letter writing. With pen and ink.

Efficient, quick communication is a product of power-politics. In order to exert one's influence geographically, it's necessary to communicate one's will over distances and do so in as little time and with as much efficiency as possible. Slow messaging just doesn't make sense in that context. And that simple necessity has soaked through most of our forms of communicating, even when we are not particularly powerful. It just becomes an assumption that communication happens quickly - not because it cannot be any other way, but because it has become part of the unquestioned "DNA" of communication" as a social practice.



But, as in most of our projects, we want to work from unconventional

assumptions in order to see what the experiences of communication in a different "anti-" universe might be like. What can we learn about our existing social practices of communication - instant messaging, SMS, always-available styles of presence online - if we do an experiment where the assumption is the opposite. In this case, if we make communication much slower, what do we learn about new ways of relating and sharing with our friends and loved ones? We're not necessarily assuming that this is the best way to communicate, for example. We're not making a new product or something of this sort. It is very much an experiment in design as a way to answer some perplexing questions about the relationships we maintain through all these peculiar and compelling messaging systems.

www.nearfuturelaboratory.com

www.nearfuturelaboratory.com/2007/04/04/old312/

www.nearfuturelaboratory.com/2007/06/25/left-to-our-own-devices-hardwar-sketchingwhat-this-means/

The Sensitive State Of The World To The World

Alessio Chierico



Between the several Italian reality that are entering the electronic and contemporary art world, this year Perugia hosted some events that deserve particular attention. Performance, workshop, interactive environment, exhibitions, competitions, concerts, meetings, festivals: this was “Le arti in città”, that showed between its protagonists Saul Saguatti, Murcof, Giovanni Sollima and Isabella Bordoni.

The project of Isabella Bordoni together with Luca Berardi and Angelo Benedetti for “Le arti in città” in Perugia developed in three parts. Public spaces such as escalators and elevators played the recording of the conference “Simplicity and Chaos” by John Cage, held in 1992, and elaborated as poetry to build a

soundscape. A workshop of a week collected and edited audio-video material about the city and personal experiences of every participant, realizing an installation inserted in the context of the conclusive performance. The final event has seen the poetical-performance exhibition of Isabella Bordoni, alternated to the music of the violoncellist Ulrike Brand, at the Rocca Paolina.

Isabella Bordoni is a poet, director and actress. Her interest is for acoustic and visual events, for technologies sensible to memory and language and for communication systems. Theatre, radio, performance and media are the contexts she enjoys the most. From the middle 80s, she works in the north of Europe, particularly inside the research centers of the new technologies applied to arts, of Linz, Graz, Wien and in Germany. From 1985 to 2000 she's fundamental part of Giardini Pensili, Theatre Company of particular relevance in technology and scenic arts ambit. She teaches Videoart and Direction/Dramaturgy at the Beaux Arts Academy in Rimini and collaborates as professor at the Digital Environment Design master at the NABA in Milan.



Alessio Chierico: In your artistic research you're now interested in creating poetical environment that mix with the space: its structure, its history and people that pass or live there. Word, voice, sound and scene are the elements on which you focalize your work. Which kind of relation do you design between these elements and the space that host your creations?

Isabella Bordoni: Every artistical research is founded on a place, no matter if a theatre scene or a space limited to an action, a gesture, to one or more body, or the one open and unpredictable of the public space. In this last case the work on spaces contains more incognitos, some of which are part of the relation system that is created between event and user, inside the mechanism sensible

to the comprehension and the answer. Operations of this kind are a real mystery.

I use calling poetry.scapes a permanent project that includes events realized on different scales, sometime realized with interactive technologies. It's about installations or events that create poetic proximity with places. Approaching a position or experience it's like taking a risk, it is elaborating spaces of knowledge where our experience doesn't arrive. There are anyway some rules given by the experience, which honesty is the first one. You cannot bluff what exists. The honesty I'm talking about is an internship, a measure of our knowledge, maybe even a geometric condition that gives shapes a space. Therefore, I think it's all about creating relations between identities, made of "emotional relationships". And the space turn into an emotional, contradictory, exigent and hence "real" map. It is a space of truth exposed to knowledge. You say, "space that host creation", and it is correct because every space is hospitable. The events I create are an experience that reciprocally situates and de-situates bodies and territories. Poetry has the possibility to con/fuse and understand the opposites. (N.O.T.: in Italian 'con' means with)



Alessio Chierico: Defining and collocating your art, you talk about “Terzo Paesaggio” as refuge for diversity. Which particular importance does this location own? Which poetical interests can it express?

Isabella Bordoni: I’m interested in the concept of “third”. Third is, some way, the unexpected relation space that you give your work where dualism meanings divide. Third subject or object in a relation that opens to dualism of collectivity and that brakes a predictable equilibrium or dialectic. It is the illness inside a wealth body; it is the immigrant inside the State; it is the trauma inside the existence; it is the doubt inside certainties; it is the question that goes beyond the answers.

All disturbing elements that delete the I from the ego and make it a wandering subject. But the idea of the “Third” is also the contrary of each of these elements. Somewhere there’s a

“yes” to listen to. This is the unexpected. The unexpected is the “yes” of a defeat that is not slavery but rather new look. When you don’t search for it, it arrives. It is the neuter more than the masculine and feminine, aversive creature that contains chains and cuttings, it’s a “space of relation”, subjected but not submitted.

Third passage echoes Third State , a space that doesn’t express power or submission to power. So I’m interested in thinking a certain passage as third place, between light and shadow. I got a debt for this with a little book, “Manifesto of the Third Passage” by Gilles Clément, which talks about confused and no-named spaces. Reading it, I understood the passage/territory Clément states as Third is exactly the artistic space I tend to. That’s probably the reason why during the years I renounced to names, categories, definitions to inhabit border and passage zones.



Alessio Chierico: I find interesting the conception of “everywhere-place”, almost a contraposition or better a different prospective than the one proposed by “no-place”. The “no-place” has been one of the characteristic symbols of the post-modern culture; we could talk about the sampling culture in art, the usage of preexisting forms. Can the concept of “everywhere-place”, and the poetical potentialities of the environment, be considered as presage of the passage to a creative re-evaluation inside the contemporary context?

Isabella Bordoni: The concept of no-place first, and then the super-place and sub-place, are fundamental to understand the city, the society the contemporary art. In this prospective, the interpretations of Marc Augé, but also Mike Davies and Foucault, took place where the city is exposed, where the urban body becomes mass, where the human body turns into exposition and consumerism place. Where the space completes itself because of an excess of representation. Hotels, malls, cinemas are plenty of social prospective sense. Understand them, make us understand the exigencies of the nowadays life. I’m interested most of all by another prospective that I named “poetic citizenship”, where the two terms, citizenship and poetic, move unite and disunite, in a common

space of obsolescence. Old places are the forgotten residencies, the little memories and the look to the childhood as passage and transformation place. They conserve the memory of their past as foreshadow of the future, as promise, as life triumph. Recognize them means giving back the laws of the original life to every place. A poetic everywhere. So with “everywhere-place” I mean an undefined and inalienable time-space.

Alessio Chierico: Inside the environment themes, do you think a cyberspace such as the Internet has potential poetic qualities as every physical space? Can it suggest the construction of a poetry.scape?

Isabella Bordoni: I’m very connected to the Net and in general I’m very interested to communication systems. Poetic is everywhere, but rarely show up. It is a slow work it contains a utopia. Benjamin says that “The memory, similar to ultraviolet rays, indicates to everyone inside the life book an annotation that, invisible, as prophecy, interpret the text”. The memory, the annotation, the invisible I say that sometime my work breathe inside the folds of the speech. I know I’m part of a minority thought. I adore conducting the art in a state of suspension and amazement. This process asks to live a real experience of senses, but also describes an

interior scene, being in the confusion, being lost. This way sensible territories are investigated and reveal their own enigma. If Internet is interpreted as third place, the answer is yes; it is possible to go by in this third place of the elsewhere. By the way, it is the Net itself that allows the remote fruition, wanderer, multi-directional and by the shared authorial. Besides, I got the impression that the space of the Net is nowadays interpreted as here, as immediate and as exposed. So it is possible to build poetic platform on the Internet, tools ready to compose poetry.scapes, provided that here will be mediated with there.



Alessio Chierico: How do you see technologies and media related to arts with antique origins as poetry and theatre? Which is their role inside your creation? Are they considered following an aesthetic worthiness or is there intent to investigate inside those languages as well?

Isabella Bordoni: Writing has been my First creative thing I made in my youth. I then grew in the ambit of North European research, relating immediately artistic projects with communication technologies. I talk about projects such as "La Natura ama nascondersi" of '92, "Realtime" of '93, "Lost Memories" of '94, "Horizontal Radio" of '95 or "Sphil" of '96, collective projects that saw me protagonists with others, because often the physical world interfaced the Net. I had the dramaturgic responsibility of the project, I had to create a poetical texture between the word, the scene and the media. I lived the Italian theatre from the middle 80 s, following the path opened with the multi-disciplines art. My theatre experience developed spontaneously in the reciprocal trespassing of languages, arts and technologies. I can't think about a real distinction between aesthetic worthiness and the investigation of the language, as I don't think a language can exist without aesthetic.

Alessio Chierico: The body is an essential expressive element in performance and theatre areas. Which conditions does the technologic development impose in relation with body? Which characters can the man-machine interface originate?

Isabella Bordoni: When we talk about landscape/territories/scenes, we

inevitably find a corporal place. The body is a glorious, changeable machine, which already contains its interface, its communicative prosthesis: the language. In my performance and writing experience I desired putting on scene an athletic but also sacred body-language. As home and intruder, on one side the body-language is quiet and contemplative, on the other side kinetic and viral. Obviously it is not about value that contradict, but once again about opening the conflict that third places own, about resonance and invisibility. I think that technology brings fantastic. Not all the technology, but a technology that honor the man childhood, its poetical memory. Therefore, a childish, imprudent, dreaming technology.



Alessio Chierico: “Different nature”, name of the workshop you directed, refers to multiple stratifications of Perugia , which see different époques enter the same environment. And

different were the research areas that you investigated: poetry and landscape, childhood and time. Does a natural conceptual relation exist between time and experience of a city and those of a person? Which emotional similarities link poetry of the landscape/place to the poetry of the person?

Isabella Bordoni: Everything exists inside the knowledge. Person and world, macro and micro-cosmos enter one in the other, deeping the grill of the reciprocal looks. I call “look”, the sensitivity the world has toward the world. Absolutely, having a time and geography different to each other makes us who we are. You know, this is the invisible map we were talking about. I dedicated a Borges poem to this project: “ ”

Alessio Chierico: In your soundscape of public environment you worked using the technical structure that was already present, employing institutional systems with a certain pervading degree. Is there intent in that, or did you used those audio instruments only to “talk with the place voice”?

Isabella Bordoni: An interesting aspect of the soundscape of Perugia , inside and outside the Rocca Paolina, was the relation with a location that, as you said before, contains so many historical stratifications. The Roman

and Etrurian history, the medieval and modern, and the contemporary one are the sign of the plural nature of this city. And then, the today design multi-ethnic centers and peripheries. It's been a bet to work "with" the Rocca Paolina, as the space was so fascinating, but also so difficult, that it was like working with a real body. Inside the Rocca antique streets and squares of the medieval Perugia are found, but lifts and escalators turn this place into something more and more controversial and beautiful, connecting the low part of the city with the high part from 1982. Suddenly, when you step inside it, as stranger, you think about "Parigi capital of the 19 th Century" by Benjamin, you think about the technical age, about the "passage", about the mutations of the first industrial revolution, you fall in a temporal "gap" of enormous strength.



You can easily understand how the "flow" idea at the conceptual base of

the section managed by Moreno Barboni, where "Diverse Nature" has been hosted, perfectly fit the environment. It's been all in one, architectonic conformation, its use as infrastructure, its technical equipment. Moreover, the re-semantic work has been interesting as well, if you think the music centre of the entire mechanic transportation system, normally used for service announcements, alarms, and so on, has been used to create a poetic nerve, starting from John Cage work.

The June 23 rd of 1992 John Cage presented the conference "Simplicity and Chaos" in Perugia , invited by Quaderni Perugini di Musica Contemporanea. I was there, expecting for my daughter that would have been born in a while. I often thought about that brief but intense meeting and the phrase "everything will be good" and a cuddle. Fifteen years later, the recording, of what would have been for Cage his last travel to Italy a few months before his death, came back in the city as poetic pulsation. With those materials mixed with my voice and words I desired giving testimony and gift. So we're back to those "affective relations" we were talking at the beginning.

www.leartiincitta.it

www.ib-arts.org

Art Futura 2007: The Next Net

Barbara Sansone



From 25 th to 28 th October 2007 Barcelona witnessed the 18 th edition of Festival ArtFutura, hosted as tradition in the stand of del Mercat de les Flores . The subject for this edition was “The Next Net”: experts and celebrities of the field tried to foresee the next developments of the web.

Although extremely interesting and well explained during the conferences of the 1 st afternoon, actually the theme was then put aside to make room for spectacle effects, 3Ds and videogames. Everything was as usual conducted by experts able to offer communicative and exciting exhibitions. Moreover everything was accompanied by highly useful information for the one who wants to live consciously the technical developments more and more

slipping into everyday life. Yet it is to say that the title was a bit misleading for a festival more concerned in cinema and 3D standard applications rather than in a real experimentation.

On the occasion of the Festival, Marcel·lí Antunez showed for the first time his new performance, Hipermembrana, the next step of his project Membrana, where on the stage there are actors, sensors, interactive videos, dreskeletons and shouting machine. Reminding more a Boccaccio’s work than a Dante’s one, two famous Italian writers straddling the 13th and 14th century, the performance leads the public in a hellish trip following a minotaur’ s orgy adventures. As usual the whole structure is interesting and well organised, allowing video projections and sounds to interact with the actors and Mr. Marcel·lí’s wonderful draws to play a role in the ~~Apollon Durand~~ the festival program

Mr. Marcel·lí Antunez was dedicated the showing of El Dibuxant, a documentary film exploring his life and works and told by the same actor while depicting a composition on a wall.

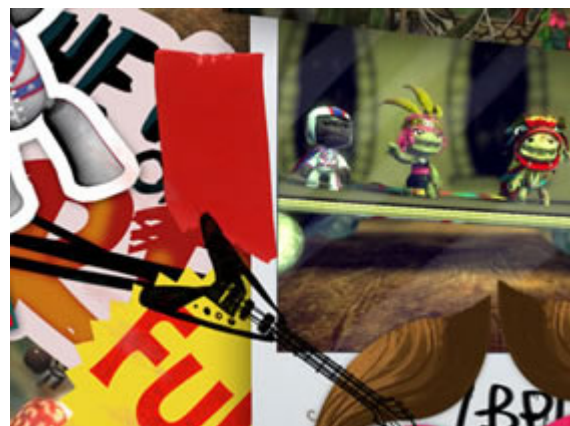


Among the projects you could see there were a selection of Intros and Demos (the majority of them extracted by videogames) and 3D animation works, all of them of high quality, but none actually innovative or experimental. The conferences were distributed in the 3 days of Friday, Saturday and Sunday and organised for subject: The Next Net, Visual Effects and Videogames. As already disclosed before, the most fascinating day was Friday, starting with a conference hold by many authors.

Juan Freire opened the “ball”. He’s professor for Marine Biology at the A Coruña university and very active curator for a remarkable blog (nomada.blogs.com , in Spanish) where he explores the net developments on a political, cultural and economical point of view.

Then it was the turn of Hugo Zaragoza, scientific researcher by

Yahoo! Research in Barcelona, where scientists look for algorithms able to explain the web in order to booster more complex researches. They look for a solution for classical problems in linguistics and semantics; they study the surfers behaviours, the web applications, data organization and classification. The final attempt is to find out the basis for the next net which will help people organizing contents, understand their needs and easy connect them to information. This is what the net should be able to offer through proper services.



Another interesting and pleasant speech was Enrique Dans’ one, professor at the university of Madrid and collaborator for many communication media. His analysis is focussed on what kind of people use internet, on the way and what they look for, on the difference in perceptions of the growing generations who have grown up with these tools, on the phenomena

changing ads and economy.

After Artur Serra of I2CA and his intervention about Overmundo in Brazil, we can probably come to the conclusion that Web 3.0 is already operating but it is not available for the majority of the people, it is still in an experimental step and its objective will be organizing in a more useful and rational way user participation, beyond being more participative and representing a channel for other media. This will clear the way for who has to find and select information and services on the net.

The next host is Steven Johnson, renowned author of essays such as *Everything Bad Is Good for You* or *Emergence: The Connected Lives of Ants, Brains, Cities, and Software*. His interesting point of view take the cue from the theory of vanishing-point. According to this theory our interest for a fact is inversely proportional to its geographic or emotional distance. As a consequence, although the pro of the web is that you can surf from anywhere in the world, the web must also offer instruments for contextualising the contents and the opportunity to look for information directly tied to one's own area, or even the neighbourhood.

On Friday the conferences ended with Dan Huebner of Second Life telling us the story of the birth and the

development of this social stage and he described what was happening there, what people are looking for: it would have been a more interesting analysis if only more deepened on the psychological and sociological point of view.



On the second day it took place the traditional exhibition of Vida, an international competition for Fundación Telefónica's life and artificial art, already at its 9th edition. In the NextFun stand, opposite the theatre, you could preview the winning movies of the last edition.

Then it was the turn of three celebrities of the artistic world. The first speaker was Paul Verschure analysing the performance *Re(PER)curso*, acted the previous evening by a dancer, a percussionist and a synthetic character in a 3D virtual world. Despite the long technical organization of the performance, the lacks in aesthetics

and style let you think of a school exercise rather than a mature work.

Jaume Pensa's works are definitively breathtaking. He is a Mediterranean genius always joining high tech to sensuality and beauty. One of his most extraordinary creations is Crown Fountain, a huge fountain realized in Chicago and made of blocks of glass and a thousand faces shot during two years. Jets of water come from the open mouths of these faces, recalling mythological subjects. A suggestive work, perfectly fitting with the city environment and based on a solid and well developed idea. The artist spoke about the difficulties during the realization of the work and the reactions of the citizens, what he regards as a basic issue.



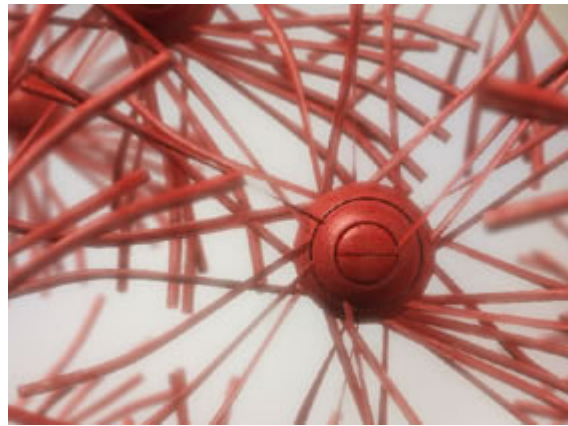
The audience feedback is essential also to Álvaro Cassinelli, a young Uruguayan physician and engineer now working as lecturer by the university in Tokio. He illustrated his

Khronos Projector on show in the stand NextFun. It deals with an other beautiful work consisting of a cube where there is a flexible screen made of lycra projecting a picture from the end to the beginning. This image is actually a video clip and you can manipulate its time of show just touching the screen or directing a light at it. So pinning candles can be again entire and enlightened, rotten watermelon can come back to be fresh and juicy, traffic jam flowing smoothly, a sunset can be again a dawn, everything happening just with a stroke. Therefore the work offer a touch-interface that allows you to manipulate the space-time variable at will.

The objectives of this work are: interactive cubism (i.e. the idea of painting playing with time), non linear narration, a 2D & 1/2 screen (that is to say offering new projection spaces, putting into question the idea that digital interfaces are fragile and therefore you mustn't touch them what on the contrary public are always willing to do-). In Mr. Alvaro's mind this exploration through gestures has still to undergo further developments in sound, dance etc. The possible applications outside art are several: just think of medicine, architecture, geology, advertisement.

The afternoon was occupied by digital animation and visual effects of 4D

cinema: Jordi Gironès who works by Framestore CFC (UK), explained some themes regarding the oncoming movie 'The Golden Compass'; Ben Hibon described his animation work paying particular attention to the short 'The Codehunters', realised for MTV Asia and taking part to the 3D competition ArtFutura Show and at last, in a meeting lasted 2 hours, Debbie Denise, Buzz Hays and Sean Philips working for Sony Pictures Imageworks spoke about the history of 3D, showing some extracts from Spiderman III, The Polar Express and Open Season. They also premièred some shots of the latest Beowulf, giving the public polarized 3D glasses. Sunday was spent for videogames: *Little big planet, Heavenly Sword ...*



Hosts and events in the festival, as usual a rich event, were perfectly organised and of course they were much more than I mentioned. For further information I suggest to visit the Festival website, where you can find a lot of clues, a blog and a long list of links.

www.artfutura.org

Transitio Mx 02: Nomadic Frontiers

Lucrezia Cippitelli



Six months after Interactivia 07, the New Media Biennale of Merida, and some kilometers further north, in the federal capital, the second edition of the Transitio Mx festival (12 th -20 th October 2007) finished, expositive and explorative project dedicated to the video and the creative use of technologies.

Transitio Mx developed in the Centro Nacional de las Artes, in the Centro de la Imagen , in the Laboratorio Arte and in all the public spaces of the city in the nearby of museums and artistic institutions. A huge organization, that counts tens of managers, producers, press agents, artistic directors and conference organizers, demonstrating that in Mexico something is moving,

but there's also an official instrumental response at the use of new technology in artistic ambit (as Arcangel Costantini said to Digicult almost a year ago <http://www.digicult.it/digimag/articloe.asp?id=719>). Transitio festival is organized by the Centro Nacional de las Artes, the Centro Multimediae and with the collaboration of the Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes.

Mexico seems manifest for a proneness to productions and researches that involve technologies and media in context of procedural but also social experimentations. No more technologies tout court but rather analysis of their impact inside local communities (artist, activists, production and expositive spaces). Theme of the festival, named Fronteras Nómadas, allude to the idea of a frontier as fluidity space, as passage, as movement. The border seems to be fixed, even if actually is changeable as it assume shapes and attitudes of who's trespassing it, of who's stopping by or who's penetrating it constantly taking each time the opposite direction.



The idea of the “wandering” frontier is born by the central idea of the exposition (one of the three platforms on which the festival is developed, as we’ll see) that wants to focus its attention on the community. The idea of the festival is to suggest a possible match between the geographic frontiers image totally in line with our times, made of movements of vast communities to bypass the physical frontiers that divide them from the idea of a better life and the disciplinary ones, which should be open, permeable and deconstructed to give space to hybrid projects and open works. As frontiers are opened, the communities who realize and share artistic practices founded on experimentation and hybridization of media are hybrid, open and oriented to commixture. They’re wandering communities because they’re mobile, as art realized in network is omnipresent and delocalized, without a specific graphic position.

Transitio Mx is articulated on three platforms: an exhibition, a symposium and a contest.

The contest, as the announcement says, is opened to producers and artists that work with video, sound NetArt, installations, performances and scene arts, and has been switched into three prizes. Sigizia, won with Identity States by the French duo Brad Kligerman y Jamil Mehdaoui; Transitio, won by the American Matt Roberts with the locative media cyclist project Cycles for Wandering; Transnational Communities, won by the collective formed by Ricardo Domínguez, Brett Stalbaum, Micha Cárdenas and Jason Najarro with their work Transborder Immigrant Tool.



The expositive platform has been noteworthy without any doubt, because of the huge quantity of projects and artists, and it has been realized in three sections. Síntesis

libre, managed by Eusebio Bañuelos, Sarah Minter, Ricardo Rendón y Karla Villegas, proposed a series of performances (360 degrees, from Graffiti Research Lab in Mexico City streets to A/V performances of Arcángel Constantini or Fernando Llanos) and contextually their documentation and filing in the Memory Lab, who contains the memory of all the processes that brought to the realization of some events.

This way, the creativity goes through every action of the mind, from the artist one to the critic or curator that create a speech using not only the verbal or written language but also the creativity. “Every practice confirm the curatorial statement artistic act or product is a way to relate with the world”. Performances and action generated and discussed inside museums are transported in the urban space and presented as parties, games, T.A.Z. as the old Hakim Bey would say, to relate with a community of not specialized public.

(in).COMunidades, directed by Laboratorio 060 (lc060.org), collective of curators/artists/producers/organizers that built a path of actions and presentations in different locations of the city not officially devoted to contemporary art.

Im_polis, run by Ale de la Puente , Rogelio Sosa, Iván Abreu, Karla Jasso. It's maybe the most important and challenging of the festival, with 29 invited artists and projects expressively thought for the festival, among which Gustavo Romano, Young Hae-Chang Heavy Industries, Ricardo Miranda Zuniga e Lucas Bambozzi. Im_polis means “inside the politic”, to reactivate the discourse of the insertion of the art inside the social life, using artistic works that often delocalize their work from the artistic context to the real one.



The program of the symposium has been rich of interventions by critics, thinkers, international artists, a mix of “think local and act global”, where the pop-stars of the new-media think as José Luis Brea mixed to artists, critics and local academics to give space to a dialogue that resonated not only abstract but also concrete, giving voice to local projects such as Fran Ilich. Interesting the idea to divide the

symposium in two sections, where the discussions variegated among art and politics, migrations, globalization, media and decentralization with some of the artists invited to Transito, critics and international thinkers. The other part, oriented to the practice, proposed a workshop on open source programs and their usage for multimedia editing (from video to text), filmmaking and even "open source tools for urban communication", realized by Graffiti Research Lab.

Short parenthesis dedicated to the confrontation with the national

paradigm (it's necessary). The official push to new media and technology seems finalized to create a fresh image, young and new, parallel to the demands of the new Mexican governments (that conquered the power in 2000 after seventy years of Partido Revolucionario Institucional). The usage of new technologies seems kind of empty, a bla bla bla of neo-avant-garde notions mixed to some citations ad hoc of the strong philosophers, as Deleuze, Guattari, Augé and so on, and words of the new media ambit (interaction, dissemination, globalized media).



curator committee of the three exhibitions and symposia (contained in the web site podcast), and you'll understand that the investment in such projects by the institutions is not a blind choice. It means pushing on local intelligencies and giving the possibilities to those.

<http://transitiomx.net/>

But only a look to the interview of the

Link index

Florian Thalhofer And The Korsakow System

<http://thalhofer.com/>

<http://www.korsakow.com/%20>

The Theatre Of Electronic Surveillance

<http://thebuildersassociation.org>

<http://www.superv.org/>

<http://www.critical-art.net/>

<http://www.notbored.org/the-scp.html>

Steal This Film 2: Share Alike

<http://0xdb.org>

<mailto:espanz@inventati.org>

The Gate: Open Considerations – Part 1

<http://www.imal.org/>

<http://odysseyart.ning.com/>

<http://www.gazirababeli.com/>

<http://www.artificialia.com/peam2006/>

<http://www.0100101110101101.org/home/performances/index.html>

<http://slfront.blogspot.com/>

<http://www.ecafe.com/getty/table.html>

<http://www.domenicoquaranta.net/blog/>

Vinz Beschi: Media Don't Eat Children

<http://www.vinzbeschi.it/>

<http://www.pinac.it/>

Who Is Afraid Of The Dark?

<http://www.digicult.it/digimag/article.asp?id=717>

<http://www.johnduncan.org/>

Quasi Objects Project By Lorenzo Oggiano

<http://www.lorenzooggiano.net>

Duprass Duo, New Audiovisual Politics

<http://webmaildomini.aruba.it/cgi-bin/webmail.cgi?cmd=url&xdata=%7E2-ea4726f493aae55b3aefc728f17e8bbcff9369eae2afe0d2cbc2dacfd4737400&url=http!3A!2F!2Fwww.duprass.com!2F>

<http://webmaildomini.aruba.it/cgi-bin/webmail.cgi?cmd=url&xdata=%7E2-ea4726f493aae55b3aefc728f17e8bbcff9369eae2afe0d2cbc2dacfd4737400&url=http!3A!2F!2Fwww.interval-recordings.com!2F>

Polymorphic Intelligence: Part 1

Beijing, World Researches Politics

Lab (au): Meta Design. Liquid Spaces And The Cities Of Tomorrow

<http://www.lab-au.com>

Near Future Lab: Imagining A Possible Future

<http://www.nearfuturelaboratory.com/>

<http://www.nearfuturelaboratory.com/2007/04/04/old312/>

<http://www.nearfuturelaboratory.com/2007/06/25/left-to-our-own-devices-hardware-sketchingwhat-this-means/>

The Sensitive State Of The World To The World

<http://www.leartiincitta.it/>

<http://www.ib-arts.org/>

Art Futura 2007: The Next Net

<http://www.artfutura.org>

Transitio Mx 02: Nomadic Frontiers

<http://www.digicult.it/digimag/article.asp?id=719>

<http://transitiomx.net/>